

Having Your Urinary Catheter Removed After Gynecologic Surgery

What is a urinary catheter?

A urinary catheter is a soft tube used to drain urine from your bladder.

Why is a urinary catheter used?

A urinary catheter is used to help with healing immediately after surgery. It works to keep your bladder empty while you're recovering. Surgery and anesthesia can cause the bladder to lose its normal sensations for a while. The catheter may stay in place for one or more weeks after you go home, depending on the type of surgery.

Where will I go to have the catheter removed?

Your catheter will be removed in the outpatient clinic. A clinic appointment will be made for you before you leave the hospital.

How is the catheter removed?

A nurse will disconnect your catheter from the drainage bag. She will then attach a syringe to the catheter and allow water to gently flow into your bladder. When your bladder is full, the catheter will be removed. You will be able to immediately go to the bathroom to empty your bladder.

Will the catheter need to be replaced?

Your catheter will only need to be replaced if you are not able to empty your bladder on your own.

What do I do after my catheter is removed?

- For the first 24 hours, you should go to the bathroom with your first urge or every 2 hours while you are awake.
- Urinate before you go to bed and if you wake during the night. You do not need to set your clock to wake up during the night.
- Drink plenty of water (6 to 8 cups) each day.
- Do not drink liquids containing caffeine.
- Limit your fluid intake after the evening meal.
- Elevate your feet while sitting, especially after the evening meal.

What if I have trouble emptying my bladder?

If you have trouble emptying your bladder, do the following:

- Urinate normally then stand up and sit back down on the commode. Try again to urinate.
- Sit in a tub of warm water and try to urinate in the tub.
- Run or rinse warm water over your vaginal area while sitting over the toilet.

When should I go to the emergency room?

You should go to the emergency room if any of these things happen:

- You are unable to urinate in 6 hours.
- You feel as if you need to urinate but can't.
- You have severe back pain.
- You notice your abdomen swelling.
- You have fever of 100 degrees or more.
- You have nausea and vomiting.

When do I call my clinic or doctor's office?

Call your clinic or doctor's office if you have questions and if you have signs of a urinary tract infection. You may have a urinary tract infection if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Urinating more frequently than usual.
- Burning or pain when you start or stop your urinary stream.
- Abdominal pressure.

Who can I call for problems and questions?

Call your clinic or doctor's office for concerns and questions during the daytime. At night call the main hospital number 919-966-4131 and have the Gynecology Resident on call paged.