An Foley™ catheter is a thin tube that is put into the bladder to drain urine. A small balloon at the end of the catheter is filled once the tube is inside the bladder to hold it in place. A urinary catheter can be used for a short time while you heal after an injury or surgery. In some cases, it may be used for longer and you will need to know the care.

**Caring for Your Skin**

- Wash around the catheter at least 2 times daily with mild soap and water. Rinse the area with clean water and dry well.
- Check your skin around the catheter for signs of redness, tenderness or swelling. Call your doctor or nurse if you have these signs.
- Secure the catheter with a stabilizing device or tape to prevent twisting, kinking, or pulling of the tubing. Clip any hair with scissors before applying.
  - Males should secure the catheter to the abdomen or upper leg.
  - Females secure the catheter to the upper leg.

**Using a Drainage Bag**

- Always keep the bag lower than your bladder, whether you are sitting, lying down or standing. This reduces the chance of urine backing up into your bladder, which can cause infection.

- Keep the drainage bag off of the floor.
- Empty the drainage bag every 8 hours or more often if it is more than 2/3 full.
- When in bed, place the drainage bag on the side of the bed below the mattress using the hook to attach it to the bed frame. Put the tubing over the top of your leg. Arrange it so there are no kinks or loops to slow flow of urine.
- If your catheter pulls apart from the drainage bag, clean the ends of both tubes with an alcohol pad or cotton balls soaked with alcohol. Push the connection tube back into the catheter end and make sure it is secure.
- Avoid fitted underwear, which may pinch off the catheter tubing. Boxer shorts can be worn over the catheter by men and women.

**Emptying the Drainage Bag**

1. Wash your hands with warm water and antibacterial soap.
2. Remove the tube at the bottom of the bag from its sleeve.
3. Unclamp the tube and let the urine drain into the measuring container or toilet if you do not need to record the amount of urine drained.

4. Re-clamp the tube and wipe off the end with an alcohol pad or cotton ball soaked with alcohol. Put it back in the sleeve on the drainage bag.

5. Wash your hands again with warm water and antibacterial soap.

6. Record the amount of urine drained if your doctor has asked you to do that.

7. Your drainage bag will last about a month. Replace it when it becomes discolored, has a strong smell, leaks or becomes torn.

Using a Leg Bag
A leg bag is a smaller drainage bag that can be attached to the upper or lower leg so you are free to move without carrying the larger drainage bag. It can be worn under pants that have loose legs or a skirt.

Do not wear the leg bag when you are lying down because the urine could flow back into your bladder and cause an infection.

Connecting a Leg Bag
1. Empty the urine from your drainage bag before changing to your leg bag.

2. Remove the cap from the connection tube on the leg bag – keep the cap to put on the end of the drainage bag tubing.

3. Clean the end of the tubing with alcohol.

4. Pinch the end of the catheter tube closed with your fingers or a clamp.

5. Take the catheter apart from the drainage tubing by carefully twisting – do not pull on the catheter.

6. Attach the catheter to the tubing of the leg bag. Check to be sure it is tight, then un-pinchn or remove the clamp.

7. Place the leg bag on the front or outside of your upper leg. Make certain there is no pulling on the catheter.
   - To wear on the upper leg: Attach the top strap around your upper leg and the lower strap just above your knee.
   - To wear on your lower leg: Attach the top strap around your lower leg just below your knee and the lower strap around your lower calf.
   - Do not fasten the straps too tightly. Loosen the straps if your leg feels numb or tingly, or if your skin becomes reddened or pale.

Clean your leg bag every night
Soak it in a vinegar and water solution. Use 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water, such as 1/3 cup vinegar and 1 cup water. This will clean the bag and decrease odor. The leg bag will last about a month before you need to replace it.
Call your doctor if you have:

- Burning or pain in your lower abdomen
- Fever above 100.6°F or chills
- Cloudy or foul-smelling urine
- Bloody urine (Unless you have had surgery and were told your urine would be bloody for a period of time. Call your doctor if the bleeding increases or becomes a brighter red.)
- Little or no urine flow
- Pain or tenderness across your mid to lower back or abdomen
- Swelling, redness, or pain at your meatus

Getting supplies

You can purchase your catheter care supplies at hospital equipment and supply stores. Have at least one extra drainage bag on hand in case you get a hole in the bag you are using. Be sure to keep the extra strap that comes with your leg bag.

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.