Instructions for Care of your Nephrostomy Catheter

A nephrostomy catheter goes through your skin into your kidney. This catheter is a thin, flexible tube used to drain urine from your kidney out of your body into a drainage bag. The normal path cannot be followed. Proper care of yourself and your nephrostomy catheter is important.

Activity

- Don’t lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until your doctor say it is okay.
- Avoid any activity that causes a pulling sensation, pain around the catheter, or kinking in the catheter.
  - Avoid strenuous activities, such as mowing the lawn, vacuuming, playing sports, or
  - Do not engage in any activity that will cause your tubing to be pulled or moved.
- Slowly increase your activity level with short, frequent walks 3–4 times a day.
- Don’t drive while you are still taking pain medication. Wait until your doctor says it’s okay to drive.

General Care

- Eat your normal diet.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day, unless directed otherwise.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes that won’t pull or kink the catheter tube.
- If you were asked to stop any medications before the surgery, be sure to ask the doctor when you may restart taking them. This is especially important in the case of blood thinners (anticoagulants or antiplatelet agents).
- Shower as needed. Protect the dressing with plastic and replace the dressing if it should become damp. Do not soak in the bathtub.

Care of your skin

You will need help with this because the catheter is usually on your back.

- The dressing to the insertion site is changed every other day for one week. The dressing then may be changed once per week. The dressing is also needs to be changed when it becomes loose or dirty.
  - Wash your hands
  - Remove old dressing
  - Throw away the dressing in a plastic bag
  - Cleanse skin around the catheter gently using a cotton swab soaked with a solution of half hydrogen peroxide and half warm water. Pat dry.
Check to see that the sutures or device anchoring the catheter to the skin is secure.
- Apply a dry 4 X 4 gauze and secure with tape or transparent dressing.
- Check your dressing often to make sure the tubing is secure.

Care of Your Catheter:

- Don’t let the drainage bag hang freely, or it will pull on the catheter.
- Keep the urinary bag below the level of your kidney.
- You may choose a small urinary bag secured to the leg during the day and a larger drainage bag at night.
  - Remember a smaller bag needs to be emptied more often.
  - Wash drainage bag once a week in a 1:1 vinegar and water solution. Rinse well with water and allow to dry
- Empty the drainage bag often to keep the weight of the bag from pulling on the catheter.
  - Empty the bag when it is one-half to two-thirds full.
  - Always empty the bag before you go to bed.
  - Wash your hands before and after emptying the bag.
- Measure and record the amount and color of the urine in the bag.

Follow-Up

- Make a follow-up appointment as directed by our staff.
- Your doctor will usually replace the catheter every two to three months to prevent blockage, so be sure to keep your appointments.
When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- A catheter that is not draining
- A noticeable increase or decrease in the amount of urine that drains
- The catheter comes out (Do NOT try to put it back in)
- Pain
  - Increased pain
  - Severe pain in your side
  - Back pain
    - Pain, redness, bleeding or discharge around catheter
- Unexpected leakage of urine from the catheter site;
- Fever above 101.0°F (38.3°C)
- Cloudy or smelly urine
- Urine that changes to a pink or red color
- Nausea and vomiting

ANY QUESTIONS??