



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Working Together to Prevent Urinary Catheter Infection

A urinary catheter is a thin tube placed into the bladder to drain urine. Urine drains through the tube and collects in a bag. It is possible for germs to enter the urinary tract by moving up along the catheter and into the bladder. Many of the germs that cause bladder infection are common germs found in the intestines. If these germs get onto the urinary catheter it is possible for them to cause a bladder infection.

What are some common symptoms of urinary infection?

- Burning or pain in the lower abdomen.
- Fever.
- Bloody urine may be a sign of infection, but it can also be caused by other problems
- Burning during urination or an increase in how often you have to urinate after the catheter is removed can also be signs of infection.

If you notice any of the symptoms above, tell your health care provider right away.

How is a urinary tract infection treated?

- Most infections are treated with antibiotics. If you have pain you will be given pain medicine.

What are hospitals doing to prevent infection?

- Catheters are put in only when needed.
- Only properly trained healthcare providers insert catheters.
- Catheters are removed as soon as possible to reduce the risk of infection.
- Health care providers do careful hygiene around the catheter.

What can patients and families do to prevent infection?

- Always wash your hands before touching your catheter or tubing.
- Make sure that the bag that holds the urine stays below the level of your bladder?
- Ask your health care provider if you think the bag is not in the proper place.
- Do not tug or pull on the tubing.
- Check with your health care providers each day to find out if you still need to have the catheter.

All members of the healthcare team help to prevent infections. You can help prevent infections because you are a member of the healthcare team.

Speak Up if You Have Questions