



## CATHETER VALVES

Information about catheter valves from  
The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS)

You have been given this leaflet to provide you with detailed information about using catheter valves.

We have consulted specialists during its preparation, so it represents best practice in UK urology. You should use it in addition to any advice already given to you.



To view this leaflet online, scan the QR code (right) or type the short URL below it into your web browser:

<http://rb.gy/dsp4j>

### What is a catheter valve?

If you need a catheter to drain your bladder, your Consultant or Specialist Nurse may recommend using a catheter valve. This means that you do not need to wear a permanent drainage bag.

Valves, however, are not suitable for all patients because you need good manual dexterity, good cognition and some level of bladder sensation; there are certain operations after which valves should not be used.



The valve (pictured right) fits securely into the end of your catheter and can be opened at regular intervals to drain urine out. It is more discreet and comfortable than a drainage bag, allowing your bladder to fill and empty as normally as possible with a catheter in place.

Before using a catheter valve, it is essential to check with your urology team that the use of a valve is appropriate for you.

### How do I use the valve?

Your specialist nurse will show you how to open and close the valve to drain your bladder. They will also tell you how often this needs to be done. If you experience any discomfort from your bladder, you should drain the catheter straight away.

- first, wash your hands thoroughly
- hold the valve over the toilet (or other receptacle), open it and allow the catheter to drain completely
- close the valve with clean tissue and replace it inside your underclothes;
- wash your hands again after use;
- if you do not wear close-fitting garments, your catheter can be supported by a strap on the leg but this should be done without any tension or pulling on the catheter; your specialist nurse will help you with this
- do not allow the catheter to hang unsupported since this will cause discomfort
- if you drain your urine into a receptacle at home, wash the receptacle in warm, soapy water after use and store it upside down

### **How should I keep the area clean?**

You should wash the area around the catheter with warm soapy water once or twice a day. If you are an uncircumcised male, you should retract your foreskin, clean the head of your penis & catheter and then slide the foreskin forward again.

You may bathe or shower with the catheter in place. Most catheter valves need changing approximately once a week. However, your nurse can advise you about washing, depending on the valve type you have. If you do need to remove the valve for any reason before it is due for a change, wash it thoroughly in clean water and dry it on a clean paper towel.

### **What should I do if the valve does not work?**

Wash your hands, point the catheter over the toilet and remove the valve from the end of the catheter. If the catheter starts to drain well, your valve may be faulty and you should replace it with a new one. If you do not have a spare valve, you should attach a drainage bag to the end of the catheter as a temporary measure (your nurse will show you how to do this) until a replacement valve can be obtained.

If the catheter does not drain at all, you should contact your GP, district nurse or specialist nurse immediately.



Your district nurse will visit you at home soon after your discharge, to check that there are no problems. They will leave a contact telephone number, where they can be contacted if you have problems with your catheter.

## Remember

- the valve is only for **your** catheter;
- your valve should not be used by anyone else;
- you should aim to drink at least 2 litres of fluid per day; and
- try to avoid constipation by eating fresh fruit and vegetables.

## What sources were used to prepare this leaflet?

This leaflet uses information from consensus panels and other evidence-based sources including:

- the [Department of Health \(England\)](#);
- the [Cochrane Collaboration](#); and
- the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

This leaflet also follows style guidelines from:

- the [Royal National Institute for Blind People \(RNIB\)](#);
- the [Information Standard](#);
- the [Patient Information Forum](#); and
- the [Plain English Campaign](#).

### DISCLAIMER

Whilst we have made every effort to give accurate information, there may still be errors or omissions in this leaflet. BAUS cannot accept responsibility for any loss from action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

**PLEASE NOTE:** the staff at BAUS are not medically trained, and are unable to answer questions about the information provided in this leaflet. If you have any questions, you should contact your Urologist, Specialist Nurse or GP in the first instance.