



The British Association of Urological Surgeons

Having a permanent suprapubic catheter for women

Information about suprapubic catheter care

You have this leaflet because you have a suprapubic catheter in your bladder or are about to have one put in. The aim of this leaflet is to give you information about what this involves.

Expert doctors in the UK have written it. Please also remember the advice your own doctor or nurse has already given you.

What is a catheter?

If you are unable to empty your bladder normally, you may need a catheter. This is a small tube made out of latex or silicone. It stays in your bladder and drains your pee.

The catheter has a balloon at one end. This is filled with fluid to stop the catheter falling out. Your nurse will normally change the catheter every 3 months.

There are 2 ways the tube gets to your bladder:

- It goes in through the pipe that lets your pee out. We call this your urethra.
- It goes directly into your bladder through your skin. It comes out at the lower part of your tummy. We call this a suprapubic catheter.

What problems can happen?

All catheters can have problems. This includes both urethral and suprapubic catheters. These problems include:

- The catheter falls out.
- The catheter gets blocked so pee cannot drain.
- You get painful spasms in your bladder.
- Pee leaks around your catheter.
- You have pee infections that come back again and again.
- You get small stones or bits in your pee.

What are the good points of a suprapubic catheter?

- People often find them more comfortable and easier to look after than urethral catheters.
- They are usually easier to change.
- They might be less likely to get blocked.

- Sometimes a urethral catheter can cause damage to the urethra. You do not get this with a suprapubic catheter.
- Sex can be uncomfortable with a urethral catheter.

What are the difficult parts?

- You need an operation to put the suprapubic catheter in. You can find out more about this [here](#). You do not need an operation to change the catheter.
- You may see some fluid around the tube in your tummy. This is normal and does not need treatment.
- You may still leak pee through your urethra.

What are your other options?

Instead of a suprapubic catheter, you might be able to use:

- **Pads.** These will catch leaks of pee if they are small. This is a good choice if the leaking does not bother you.
- **Self-catheterisation.** This is a tube you put in yourself when you need to pee. You take it out after each use.
- **A urethral catheter.** This goes in through the tube in your body where pee comes out. The catheter stays in all the time.

How is a suprapubic catheter put in?

You may have a general anaesthetic. This is where the operation is done whilst you are asleep. Or you may have a spinal anaesthetic. This is when the doctor makes you numb from the waist down.

How is the catheter changed?

Your nurse will change the catheter every 3 months. This is quick and can be done at home.

What if the catheter falls out?

If the catheter falls out, it needs to be put back in right away. Call your doctor, nurse or go to A&E.

It is easy to do if it's done right away.

The hole in your tummy will close up if it can't be put back. You may then need another operation to put in a new catheter.

Important

We have worked hard to make this leaflet clear and correct. But it cannot replace advice from your own doctor or nurse. Always ask them if you are worried or unsure.

What should you do with this leaflet?

You can keep this leaflet. If you have more questions, ask your doctor or nurse. They can explain more.

Online access

You can see this leaflet on the internet.

Scan the special picture (QR code).



or

<https://rb.gy/i3s355>

Feedback

We'd love to know what you think! You can share your thoughts by emailing us at admin@baus.org.uk

100%

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