What is a Foley Catheter?  
A Foley catheter is a soft plastic tube that is inserted into the bladder to drain the urine. A long term or “indwelling” urethral catheter is left in place for a period of time and is attached to a drainage bag to collect the urine.

How to Care For Your Catheter  
Care of the indwelling catheter must include daily cleansing of the urethral area where the catheter exits the body and the catheter itself with soap and water.

- The area should also be thoroughly cleansed after all bowel movements to prevent infection.
- To keep the outlet valve from becoming infected, wash your hands before and after handling the drainage device. Do not allow the outlet valve to touch anything. If the outlet becomes obviously dirty, it should be cleaned with soap and water.
- You may notice a pink-colored mucus discharge at the tip of your penis. This is a normal reaction to the urethral irritation from the catheter.
- You can apply KY Jelly® ointment around the tip of the penis, where the catheter enters, up to 4 times a day to reduce local irritation.
- Keep the drainage bag at a lower level than the bladder to prevent a back flow of urine back up into the bladder.
- Empty the drainage device at least every 8 hours or when the bag is full.

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How to Clean the Drainage Bag

- Remove the drainage bag from the catheter. Attach the catheter to a second drainage device during the cleansing.
- Rinse the bag with warm soapy water if necessary.
- Hang the bag with the outlet valve open to drain and dry the bag.

Dealing with Common Catheter Problems

**Leaking:** If you have urine leaking from the catheter where it enters the penis, use diapers or some other absorbent materials to contain the leakage. If the catheter is not draining well, lie down flat and drink a lot of water. If you go to your local emergency room, do not let them remove or change the catheter without first speaking with your doctor.

**Bladder Spasms:** While the catheter is in the bladder, you may experience bladder spasms, often set off by bowel movements. Signs of bladder spasms include pain in the tip of your penis, urinary or bloody discharge around the insertion site of the catheter, and pain in your lower abdominal/pelvic area. To minimize spasm, avoid constipation (use stool softeners) and reduce sudden movement that may pull on the catheter. If spasms become too painful, we will prescribe medication to decrease them.

**Swelling or Bruising:** Sometimes, your scrotum and penile area may swell or look bruised for one to two days if you have had surgery. This is normal and should go away after the catheter is removed. To help reduce the swelling, put a rolled-up towel underneath your scrotum whenever you are sitting or lying down.

**Blood Clots in your Urine:** Small blood clots are normal and will go away on their own. Large clots, however, can block your catheter and cause urine to leak or your bladder to spasm. If you see any blood in your urine, drink more fluids until your urine clears up. Call us immediately if your urine stops draining completely.

When To Call the Doctor

**Call your doctor immediately if you experience:**
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness or tenderness along a vein, at an IV site, or at any other wound or skin irritation
- bleeding in or around the catheter
- no urine draining from the catheter, even though you have been drinking plenty of fluids
- a lot of urine leaking around the catheter
- urine that has a very strong smell
- urine that is thick or cloudy
- Swelling where the catheter enters your body (your urethra)