Urology Department

Catheter valves:
Frequently asked questions

What is a catheter valve?
If you need a catheter to drain your bladder, a catheter valve may be used provided the doctors know that your bladder can hold a reasonable quantity of urine without discomfort or leakage.

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

How do I use the valve?
The specialist nurse will show you how to open and close the valve to drain your bladder. She/he will also discuss how often this needs to be done. If you experience any discomfort from your bladder, you should drain the catheter at that time.

What should I do with the valve?
- First, wash your hands thoroughly.
- Position the valve over the toilet or receptacle, open the valve and allow the catheter to drain to completion. Wipe the valve with clean tissue and replace it inside your underclothes.
- Now, wash your hands again.
- If you do not wear close fitting garments, your catheter should be supported by a strap on the leg about which the specialist nurse will give you advice.
- Do not allow the catheter to hang down unsupported since this will cause discomfort.
- If you drain the urine into a receptacle at home, the receptacle should be washed in warm, soapy water after use and stored upside down.
How should I keep the area clean?
If the catheter goes into the body through the usual opening into the bladder (a urethral catheter), the area around the catheter should be washed with warm water and mild soap twice a day.

On the other hand, if the catheter enters the body through the abdominal wall (a suprapubic catheter), the area around the catheter should be cleaned twice daily and, if necessary, a dry dressing applied. Your district nurse will discuss this with you.

You may bathe or shower with the catheter in place. Normally, the valve does not need to be removed from the catheter unless the catheter itself needs removal or changing. If the valve does have to be removed for any reason, it should be washed thoroughly in clean water and dried on a clean paper towel.

Who can I contact for more help or information?

Oncology nurses
Uro-oncology nurse specialist
01223 586748

Bladder cancer nurse practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy and BCG)
01223 274608

Prostate cancer nurse practitioner
01223 274608 or 216897 or bleep 154-548

Surgical care practitioner
01223 348590 or 256157 or bleep 154-351

Non-oncology nurses
Urology nurse practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)
01223 274608 or 586748 or bleep 157-237

Urology nurse practitioner (stoma care)
01223 349800

Urology nurse practitioner (stone disease)
01223 349800 or bleep 152-879

Patient Advice and Liaison Centre (PALS)
Telephone:
+44 (0)1223 216756 or 257257
+44 (0)1223 274432 or 274431
PatientLine: *801 (from patient bedside telephones only)
E mail: pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Mail: PALS, Box No 53
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ
Chaplaincy and multi faith community
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217769
E mail: chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Mail: The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217589

Access office (travel, parking and security information)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 596060

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For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

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Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
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01223 216575/ Fax 01223 216069
Publish/Review date
July 2017/July 2020
File name
Catheter_valves_FAQ.doc
Version number/Ref
V8/PIN1966/Doc ref 7955
Local Ref number
25/Info_07_17