

Going home with a catheter after transurethral removal of the prostate (TURP)

This leaflet provides advice about your recovery following an operation to remove some of your prostate gland. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a catheter?

A catheter is a hollow, flexible tube that drains urine from your bladder. For more information about your catheter, please ask for a copy of our leaflet, **My catheter passport**.

Why do I need to go home with a catheter?

After this operation, swelling may sometimes occur in the prostate. This happens in about one in five (20%) of men and is usually triggered by the trauma of the surgery. The swelling causes obstruction (a blockage) that stops your bladder from emptying properly. The catheter will help to drain your urine until the swelling goes down, usually within one to four weeks.

What happens before I go home?

Before you leave the ward you should have:

- an appointment to see your consultant or nurse specialist for a check-up in six to 12 weeks' time.
- some continence pads to take home.
- our leaflet, **Having your catheter removed: an outpatient trial without catheter (TWOC)**.

As you have a catheter, your ward nurse will also:

- show you how to look after it.
- give you some spare catheter bags for day and night.
- give you contact details for your district nurse if needed.
- arrange an appointment (for within one to four weeks) for your catheter to be removed by the urology outpatient nurses. This will be posted to you.

If **any** of the above has been missed out, please talk to the nurse looking after you on the ward **before** leaving the hospital.

Will I be in pain?

You may experience a mild burning sensation when the catheter is first removed straight after your surgery. The mild burning sensation is quite normal, but if it persists beyond two weeks or becomes worse, please contact your GP as you may have a urinary infection.

We will give you some painkillers to take home. It is important that you take your painkillers on a regular basis for the first few days. Taking the medicine regularly will keep it at a constant level in your body, so will control your pain better. After a few days, you can gradually reduce your medicine until you do not need it any longer. Please contact the hospital or your GP if you find the pain difficult to control. Always follow the instructions on the packet and never take more than the recommended dose.

Why is there urine leaking around my catheter?

This is because your bladder can become irritated by the catheter tube and go into spasm, forcing some urine and blood out around the tube. This leakage may be enough to wet your clothes.

The following advice will help with the leaking but may not rid you of it completely:

- Make sure that you drink plenty of water. Avoid tea, coffee and fizzy drinks as they can irritate the bladder further. You should aim to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water, spread evenly across each day.
- Make sure that your catheter tube is not twisted or kinked. This could cause a blockage in the flow of urine in the tube and make the leakage worse.
- Don't let the urine bag get too full. If the catheter bag is heavy, it may pull on the tube and irritate the bladder.
- You can use a continence pad or gauze around the tip of the penis to soak up the excess fluid.
- **Do not** tense or push when spasm occurs as this may cause it to last longer.
- Be aware that when a spasm occurs, your urine may temporarily stop flowing into the catheter bag, and then start flowing again when the spasm has passed.

Can I bathe or shower with a catheter?

You can shower as normal with a catheter. If you do not have a shower, you can take a bath, drying the catheter bag when finished.

If I am constipated, what should I do?

This can happen because of your altered diet and reduced mobility during your hospital stay. It may take up to seven days for your bowels to get completely back to normal. You should avoid straining to pass bowel motions as this may hurt or cause bleeding. You can reduce the symptoms of constipation by:

- drinking plenty of water (1.5 to 2 litres through a day).
- eating food that is high in fibre, such as fruit, vegetables, brown bread and rice, and bran-based cereals
- taking laxatives if necessary. You can buy these from your local pharmacist or obtain a prescription from your GP.

When can I return to normal activities?

You can return to work (if it does not involve heavy lifting) and carry out normal household chores (such as shopping) when you feel up to it. For other chores, such as heavy lifting and gardening, you will need to wait for two weeks.

You should only drive again when you are free of pain and able to perform an emergency stop comfortably. You should check with your insurance company to make sure you are covered to start driving again, as they may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon. If you are taking painkillers, check with a pharmacist if it is safe for you to drive. If you are not sure about when to resume driving, please visit your GP to check your progress.

You can also fly after seven days, unless you have been advised otherwise by your doctor or specialist nurse.

When should I start my pelvic floor exercises?

These are exercises to help you regain control of your bladder. You should **only** start these exercises after your catheter has been removed and **only** if you are leaking urine.

How much exercise should I be doing?

You should gradually build up to your normal level of activity in the weeks following your surgery. It is important to exercise daily and not to remain lying or sitting for long periods of time. You should avoid heavy lifting for two weeks after your operation.

When will my catheter be removed?

Your catheter will be removed between one and four weeks after you have left hospital. The appointment for this will be posted to you. If you have not received your appointment within two weeks, call 020 7188 0710. You may need to be readmitted to the ward for an overnight stay for your catheter removal or you may be asked to come to the Urology Centre, 1st floor Southwark Wing, Guy's Hospital for about three to four hours. You do not need to do anything to prepare for your catheter removal, although it would be helpful if your bowels have been regular because if you are constipated, it may be more difficult for you to manage without the catheter. Please see our information leaflet, **Having your catheter removed: an outpatient trial without catheter (TWOC)**, for further details.

When your catheter is removed, we will give you our leaflet, **Pelvic floor exercises for men**, so you can exercise at home if needed.

What should I expect when my catheter is removed?

Once your catheter has been taken out, you may have some of the following symptoms:

- the need to pass urine often (more often than every two hours)
- a burning sensation when you pass urine
- the urgent need to pass urine
- you may not be able to reach the toilet in time and may leak urine
- you may pass blood in your urine (see below for advice on how to deal with this)
- you may have difficulty controlling your urine.

There is blood in my urine – is this normal?

It is normal to see some pink or rusty-coloured blood in your urine after your operation. If the blood is bright red and continues for longer than 48 hours, please call the ward for advice.

- Make sure that you drink plenty of water. You should aim to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day.
- Try to avoid lifting, or straining to pass bowel movements as this may make bleeding worse

It has been 10 to 14 days since my operation and I am passing debris and blood in my urine. Why is this?

It is quite normal to pass little pieces of prostate tissue and clots of blood after the operation. Around 10 to 14 days after the operation, the scab which has formed over the prostate will fall away and you will pass this in your urine.

Do not worry. Make sure that you drink plenty of water – you should aim to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day.

When will I have my follow-up appointment?

You will be seen by a specialist nurse or your consultant team six to 12 weeks after your surgery. At this visit you will be expected to urinate into a special machine that will measure how good your flow of urine is since the operation. Please come to this appointment with a full bladder, as this will speed up the time you spend in clinic.

Contact us

If you need advice or have any questions about your catheter when you get home, please contact your GP, district nurse or one of our specialist nurses:

- Sharon Clovis on 020 7188 7339 or 07500 814 939 (text only)
- Elaine Hazell on 020 7188 6783. We no longer have personal names on leaflets. Is there a bleep we can use, or perhaps just say CNS and give the two numbers?

Or, you can contact:

- Florence Ward on 020 7188 8818
- Aston Key Ward on 020 7188 8860.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 2705/VER3

Date published: October 2018

Review date: October 2021

© 2018 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
A list of sources is available on request