

Looking after your child's suprapubic catheter for urine drainage

Children's Urology

Information for Patients, Parents & Carers

Last reviewed: January 2026

Next review: January 2029

Leaflet number: 235 Version: 3

Introduction

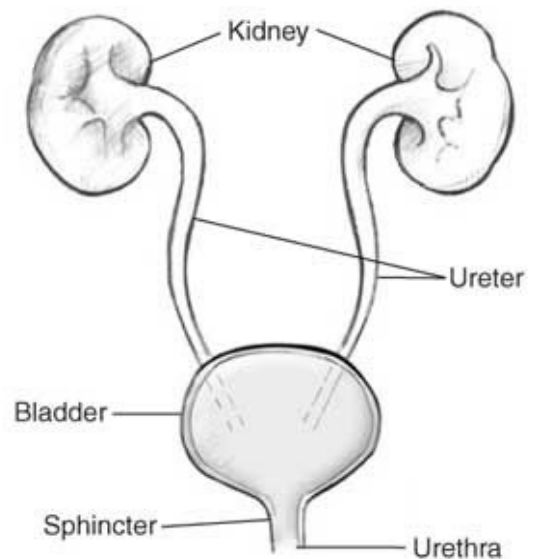
This leaflet is only for patients/ parents who have been given it by the Children's Urology Service. Do not use it without guidance from this team.

This leaflet explains what a suprapubic catheter is and how to care for it at home.

How does the urinary system work?

The urinary system consists of

- the kidneys: filter the blood to remove waste products and make pee (urine).
- the ureters: tubes that take pee from the kidneys to the bladder.
- the bladder: stores pee.
- the urethra: tube that takes pee out of the bladder when you go to the toilet.



What is a suprapubic catheter and why does my child need one?

A suprapubic catheter is a thin tube that takes pee from the bladder through the abdomen. There are many reasons why your child might need one. Some reasons why it may be needed are:

- obstruction or blockage to bladder outflow.
- after surgery to let the urinary system rest.
- to check how the urinary system is working.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

How is the catheter inserted?

It is inserted in theatre. Your child will have a general anaesthetic. This means they will be asleep.

We make a small cut into your child's tummy (abdomen) to insert it. This is held in place by a small balloon on the inside.

How long does the procedure take?

The procedure takes around 2 hours. This includes anesthetic and recovery time.

What are the risks?

- Infection: it is possible that having a suprapubic catheter may cause infection. If an infection happens, this is commonly treated with antibiotics taken by mouth.
- Bladder spasm: it is possible that having a suprapubic catheter may cause bladder spasm. If this happens, it can be treated with medicine taken by mouth.
- Pee leaking around the catheter: sometimes pee can leak around the catheter. If this happens the suprapubic catheter may need to be replaced.

Use the contact details on page 3 if your child has any of these complications or if you have any other concerns.

What equipment will I need at home?

- You will need the drainage system. This includes a thin, plastic tube (catheter) and a collection bag or valve cap on the end.
- You will also need some tape and new collection bags.

We will supply you with everything you need before you go home.

We will also set up a regular home delivery of all the items you will need from our designated continence prescription service.

Care at home

- We will show you how to empty the catheter using the valve.
- It will need emptying every 2 to 3 hours during the day into the toilet. It can take up to 5 minutes to empty the bladder fully.
- At night, keep the valve closed unless advised to attach a collection bag.
- The valve will need changing once a week. We will show you how to do this.
- Your child can return to school as normal. They can have a bath or shower and take part in swimming and sports. You should take care with rough and tumble play or contact sports as this may damage the catheter or the operation site.

- Do not use creams and talcum powder around the site.
- Dressings are not often needed. Tape can be used to help secure the catheter if it is pulling.
- The catheter may cause bladder cramps or spasms. We will give your child medicine to help with this. We will also give you general pain relief advice.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids. This will help reduce any discomfort and keep the pee flowing. It also reduces the risk of an infection developing.
- Encourage your child to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. This will help prevent any constipation which can effect urine drainage. Constipation can also make bladder spasms worse.
- If you notice that your child's pee becomes darker than usual, smelly, cloudy or does not drain, they may have a urine infection. You should encourage them to drink more. You must contact your GP or the specialist nurse.
- In a few situations, your child may need to have the catheter on continuous drainage into a bag. If this is needed for your child, we will give you the bags needed. We will show you how to empty and care for the bag.
- If the catheter comes out please bring your child to the Emergency Department to have it replaced. This must be within 2 hours to avoid complications when re-inserting it.

How often will the catheter need changing and who will do this?

The catheter will need changing about every 6 weeks. It will be done on the ward by a specialist nurse.

How long will my child need to have this catheter for?

They may need it on a short-term basis. Sometimes they may need it long term over a number of years. It depends on your child's condition.

Contact details

If you need advice or support please contact the Children's Urology Specialist Nurses on:

Tel: **0116 258 5533**

email: uho-tr.uhlpaedurologyspn@nhs.net

For urgent queries please call Ward 10 on Tel: **0116 258 5362**.

