Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Urinary Catheter Valves

Version number: **3**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Urinary Catheter Valves

Patient Information

Community Nursing and Infection Prevention and Control Team

- Author ID: JD
- Leaflet ref: CM 158
- Version: 3
- Leaflet title: Urinary Catheter Valves
- Last review: October 2024
- Expiry Date: October 2026

What is a catheter valve?

The catheter or flip-flow valve is a tap-like device which fits onto the end of a catheter (urethral or suprapubic).

The catheter valve enables you to store urine in your bladder and is emptied by releasing the valve.

A catheter valve can be used whether the catheter is permanent or temporary.

The catheter valve may not be suitable for people with a small sized bladder or people who have some cognitive impairment, as they may not remember to open the valve often enough.

What are the benefits of using a catheter valve?

Many people may prefer to use a catheter valve as it is more discreet and comfortable than a leg bag.

The catheter valve also offers an alternative to using urinary drainage bags.

Catheter valves may also reduce the risk of infection and blockage by allowing the intermittent flushing of urine.

Alternatives to using a catheter valve?

The catheter can freely drain via a catheter drainage bag.

Risks

You may forget to release the valve which may cause leakage around the catheter or abdominal pain when your bladder is full.

When should I open my catheter valve?

During the day you must release the catheter valve at least every four hours or more if you drink a lot.

The catheter valve should be opened whenever you need to pass urine, such as before you go to bed at night and first thing in the morning.

Quite often a night drainage bag can be attached to the open valve so that urine can drain freely overnight. This is helpful if you have a high urine output during the night.

You must open the catheter valve before you open your bowels, as this will minimise leakage around the catheter (bypassing).

How do I change my catheter valve?

You must change your catheter valve every seven days.

You must obtain advice, support and training from a healthcare professional before you change your catheter valve for the first time.

- Wash hands before starting the procedure.
- Release the catheter valve to empty the bladder.
- Remove the catheter valve and replace with a new one. Never reuse a catheter valve

How do I keep the area clean?

To keep the area clean you should:

- Wash the area where the catheter enters your body as part of a daily hygiene routine.
- Avoid applying creams, antiseptics and talc around the area.

Bathing or showering with your catheter valve in place will not cause any harm.

What if there is a discharge?

The area should be cleaned more often if a discharge occurs at the catheter entry point.

You must contact a healthcare professional if the discharge persists or smells.

How do I dispose of the catheter valve?

You can dispose of your catheter valve at home by putting it in paper or in a plastic bag and putting it in the rubbish.

How do I store the unopened catheter valve?

You must store the catheter valve in its original packaging in a dry, cool place away from direct sunlight.

Do not use the catheter valve if the original packaging has been damaged.

How do I wear the catheter valve?

You wear a leg strap on your upper thigh to support the catheter valve.

Where can I get a leg strap? (Catheter Fixation Device)

Leg straps are available on prescription.

Contact information

Community Nursing Admin Hub

Tel: 0300 707 7700



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