

Drainage Bags

When using an indwelling catheter or condom drainage it is important to have an appropriate collecting system. Drainage bags can be either body worn or free standing but must be kept below the level of the bladder to aid efficient drainage. They range in size and shape and have different taps to suit individual requirements.

Hygiene

Wash hands before touching any of the catheter equipment and before and after emptying drainage bags.

What is a leg bag?

A leg bag is a small discreet bag which is worn under normal clothing. It is attached either to your thigh or lower leg with a pair of elasticised straps. Alternatively a fabric leg bag holder can be worn either as a support sleeve on the leg or as a fabric pocket supported by a waist belt. The bag will contain the urine until it is emptied through a tap at the bottom.

How large a capacity leg bag do I need?

This will depend on your individual urine output. Leg bags are available with capacities ranging from 350ml to over 1000ml. Most bags are multi chambered which reduces noise during movement.

It is extremely important that the bag is well supported and emptied frequently (when half to two thirds full) to avoid the bag becoming too heavy so that the bag cannot slip drag on the catheter.

Do I need a sterile or non sterile bag?

If you have an indwelling catheter inserted you will need a sterile bag.

To decrease the risk of urinary tract infection the bag should not be disconnected from the catheter unless the bag is being changed.

Sterile bags are pre-packaged with a set of straps.

If you are using condom drainage a non sterile bag can be used.

Where should I position my leg bag?

The leg bag can be worn on the upper or lower leg and on the inside or outside of the leg depending on what is most comfortable for you, and ensuring there is no drag on the catheter.

How do I empty my leg bag?

Wash your hands before and after emptying the leg bag.

To empty open the tap at the bottom of the bag and let it drain. This can be done over the toilet or if this is difficult the bag can be emptied into a container.

Remember to close the tap!

How will I manage overnight?

A larger bag, usually two litres, will hold all the urine that drains from your bladder overnight. The overnight bag is connected to the bottom of the leg bag.

Alternatively, a specially designed drainage bottle can be attached to the leg bag for overnight drainage.

Make sure you leave the leg bag tap open and the tap at the base of the overnight bag closed.

Loosen your leg straps when you get into bed.

The overnight bag should be supported by a special hanger or stand. Some people prefer to place a clean basin or bucket underneath.

How do I empty the overnight drainage bag?

Before disconnecting the overnight drainage bag remember to close the leg bag tap.

Also remember to retighten your leg straps.

Empty the overnight bag by opening the tap at the base of the bag. Wash the bag out with lukewarm soapy water and rinse with clean water.

A plastic 'sauce' bottle can make cleaning easier as water can be squirted into the bag via the outlet tap.

If the bag becomes clogged with debris, flush out with white vinegar.

When do I change the leg bag and overnight bag?

It is recommended that you change the bags once a week. However, if a bag becomes damaged, difficult to empty, or uncomfortable to wear, you can change it sooner.

Wash your hands before and after connecting, or changing, the drainage bags.

Can I shower with my leg bag attached?

Yes you should shower with your leg bag attached. After showering the bag can be patted dry with a towel on the top and underside. You can change the wet straps with clean ones.

What happens if there is no urine draining into the bag?

Adequate fluid intake is required for continuous drainage to occur. Your urine should be light yellow in colour. If it is dark (concentrated) drink more unless advised to restrict fluids by your doctor.

If no urine drains for more than a couple of hours check

- Is the tubing bent or kinked?
- Is the bag hanging below the level of the bladder?
- Is the bag hanging the right way up?
- Is the tap between the leg bag and night bag opened?
- Is the night bag tap opened and urine draining on the floor?
- Is your fluid intake adequate?
- Are you constipated?

Try moving, walking around, or undoing and repositioning the leg straps.

If minimal urine has drained in four hours contact your nurse or your local doctor.

For product information and ordering please contact Independence Australia on 1300 788 855