

# Care After Having a Kidney (Nephrostomy) Tube Inserted

## Your Procedure

The nephrostomy (kidney) tube empties urine from your kidney. The tube may be connected to a drainage bag or it may just have a cap on it. To place the tube, your health care provider made a small hole (insertion site) in your skin.

## What to Expect After Your Procedure

- It is normal to have a little soreness at the insertion site.

## Activity

- Have someone drive you home.
- You should have someone stay with you or be available to help you for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Avoid strenuous (heavy) activity for 24 hours.
- Avoid any activity that causes pulling on or pain around the catheter, or a kinking of the catheter or the drainage tubing.

## Hygiene

- **Do not take a bath.**
- You may take a shower. Cover the bandages with plastic wrap before your shower. Remove the plastic wrap after your shower.

## Food and Beverages

- Return to your normal diet. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

## Pain Relief

- Return to your normal medicines (including pain medicine). Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

## If the Tube is Connected to a Drainage Bag

Urine made by your kidney will drain into the tubing and collect in the drainage bag. You may urinate the normal way, too. You may expect blood-tinged urine for up to 48 hours.

To keep your urine draining well, follow these instructions.

- Check the bag every few hours while you are awake to make sure the urine is draining.
- Do not let the tubing kink, twist or hang below the drainage bag.
- Try to avoid lying on the tubing.
- Keep the drainage bag below the level of your kidney.

## How to Empty the Drainage Bag

- Empty the bag when it is half full. Do not allow the bag to become too full as it may pull on the kidney tube.
- Place a container (empty jar or plastic bowl) near the outlet valve of the drainage bag or position yourself so the drainage from the bag can go right into the toilet.

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- Remove the cap, open the outlet valve of the drainage bag and empty the drainage into the container or toilet.
- Close the outlet valve and recap the drainage bag.

## How to Care for the Drainage Bag

- Disconnect the drainage bag from the nephrostomy (kidney) tube.
- Wash the bag with a soapy solution of warm water and a mild detergent (such as Dreft®).
- Rinse it with cool water. Let it air dry.
- Have two bags so you can wear one while drying the other.

## What to Do if the Tube is Capped

- Urine will not be draining if the nephrostomy tube is capped and not connected to a drainage bag. Urine made by the kidney will pass into the bladder and leave your body when you urinate.

## How to Change the Dressing

- Keep the catheter insertion site clean and dry.
- Change your dressing every 3 days or sooner if it is soiled or wet.
- Remove the old dressings and place them in a waste disposal container. Do not use scissors or anything sharp to remove the old dressing.
- Wash your hands.
- Wash the skin around the nephrostomy tube with warm water and pat dry. Be careful not to move the tube or the retaining disc holding it in place.
- Cut a 2-inch slit into the center of a 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge. Place the sponge around the drainage tube and on top of the tube holder (if you have one).

- Apply another 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge over the first dressing and the catheter tubing. Be careful not to kink the tubing.
- Tape the dressings in place like a frame.

## How to Irrigate the Nephrostomy Tube (if Ordered by Your Health Care Provider)

- Wash your hands well.
- Remove the drainage bag or cap from the end of the drainage tube.
- Connect the saline-filled syringe to the drainage tube.
- Slowly push the saline into the drainage tube. Do not use force.
- Remove the syringe.
- Recap or reconnect the drainage tube to the drainage bag.
- Throw away the irrigation syringe.

## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- your urine is bright red or has increasing blood clots in it
- your urine stops draining and the dressings become wet
- you have increased or sudden back pain
- you have chills or a temperature of 101 F or higher
- you have warmth, redness, tenderness or leakage around the tube insertion site
- the tube comes out
- you have any questions or concerns.