

# Condom Catheters

A condom catheter is a urine drainage system for men. It is made of a condom attached to a drainage bag. You can use a condom catheter to prevent bladder accidents or to help with draining your bladder. This can be helpful for people who have weak hands or can't get to the bathroom in time. Condom catheters are safer and have a lower risk of infection than other options. To read about other bladder drainage options, check out the [Spinal Cord Essentials](#) handouts. Handouts are available for [Foley Catheters](#) and [Intermittent Catheterization for women](#) and [Men](#).



## Finding the Right Condom Catheter

A good model keeps you dry and drains properly. You might have to try a few different types before finding the right one. Finding the right condom depends on fit, price, size, and how well your skin handles it.

**Material:** Condoms are often made out of polyvinyl or silicone. Test new materials before wearing them for a long time to make sure your skin doesn't get a rash.

**Disposable:** Single use condoms are the most common. They are designed to be changed every 24 hours but can be used for up to 48 hours.

**Size:** It's important to choose a size that fits properly. Companies have charts to help you find the right one. A condom that is too small may cause skin problems. One that is too large might leak or come off when you don't want it to.

**Application Method:** Most condoms are self-adhesive. They stay on with built-in sticky tape. Other condoms stay on by applying double-sided sticky tape placed at the base of the penis.

**Safety:** When using any new type of condom for the first time, check your skin for allergic reactions. The material and adhesive can cause your skin to react.

**Contact your Doctor or Nurse for more information.**

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### Putting on a Condom Catheter

#### Supplies

- Condom catheter
- Tubing and urine drainage bag
- Wet wipes or soapy washcloths and towel
- Alcohol swabs
- Scissors and razor
- Special double-sided tape (optional)
- Skin barrier to protect your skin from adhesive products (optional)



#### Preparing your skin

1. Wash your hands.
2. Trim or shave pubic hair at the base of your penis.
3. Wash your entire penis with soapy washcloth or wet wipes. Rinse and dry.
4. Check your skin for redness or cuts. Notify your doctor if you see a problem.
5. If using a skin barrier, apply it to the skin of the penis.
6. If using an external adhesive, apply it to the shaft of the penis in a spiral. The spiral allows for proper blood flow to the penis.

After washing, do not leave your foreskin pulled back. It can squeeze the penis and cause swelling.

#### Putting on the Condom

When putting on the condom catheter, always follow the instructions included with it.

1. Place the condom on the tip of the penis. Leave about 2 cm (0.75") of space between the tip and the draining tube.
2. Unroll the condom down your penis evenly on all sides. Stretching the penis gently might help.
3. When the condom is fully unrolled, squeeze it gently at the base of your penis for about 15 seconds. The warmth of your hand will help it stick.

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4. Check the condom. It should be firmly attached so that it stays on. Make sure it is not on too tight. If it is too tight, it can prevent blood flow and cause problems.

Check the catheter many times during the day. Make sure there is a good seal and drainage. Also check your skin for redness. Check more often if you are doing activities that might loosen it such as transfers or exercise.

### Connecting a Drainage Bag

1. Make sure your tubing is the right length to allow for regular activities.
2. Wipe down the tube connectors with an alcohol swab. Connect one end of the tubing to the tip of the condom and the other end to the drainage bag. Make sure the condom is not twisted.
3. Your drainage bag should always be below the level of your hip. This helps prevent backflow of urine. Do not fold or kink the tubing.
4. Attach the leg bag by using its straps. It should be firmly attached but not too tight. Check your skin color for redness and damage from time to time. An extra strap can be used to attach the tubing to your thigh. This helps prevent pulling on the condom. A thigh strap can be used to prevent pulling during activities.
5. Empty the leg bag before it gets too full. Most day bags can hold about 1000 mL (4 cups). Night bags can hold about 2000 mL (8 cups).

**Tip:** Attach the leg bag to a different leg every other day to prevent skin damage.

### Removing a condom catheter

Gently and slowly pull the condom off starting near the adhesive. Most of the time, condoms can be rolled off easily. If you are having a hard time with the adhesive, use a damp, warm washcloth to help loosen it. Make sure the washcloth is not too hot. You might need to apply the washcloth many times. Do not tear condom off since this could cause damage to your skin. Always check your skin for swelling or changes in colour. If you have any skin problems, get medical attention right away.

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### Possible Problems

**Penis swelling or irritation:** Redness or peeling of skin could be due to rubbing of the condom against the penis. Your condom or adhesive might be too tight. This can also be caused by leaving your foreskin pulled back. Consider getting a larger size or reapply the adhesive less tightly. Your body could also be reacting to the adhesive or material of the condom. Consider trying a different brand of condom or adhesive.

**Sores:** If you develop cuts or sores on your penis, contact your doctor. You might need to empty your bladder in a new way until your skin heals.

**Poor drainage:** Always make sure that there are no folds or kinks in the tubing. Urine that builds up inside the condom can cause a bladder infection. Also, having urine on your penis can make the skin sensitive. When putting on the condom, make sure to have about 2 cm (0.75") between the tip of the penis and the draining end of the condom. If urine is not draining well, you might have to do an intermittent catheterization. If there is still no drainage, get medical attention right away.

**Leaks:** If your condom catheter leaks, it might be too large. You can pinch the adhesive on the condom so that urine cannot leak around the seal.

**Getting an erection:** Most condom catheters can handle an erection. Condom catheters should not be used during sex.

Prevent problems by using good personal hygiene. Make sure your genitals are clean and dry at all times.

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