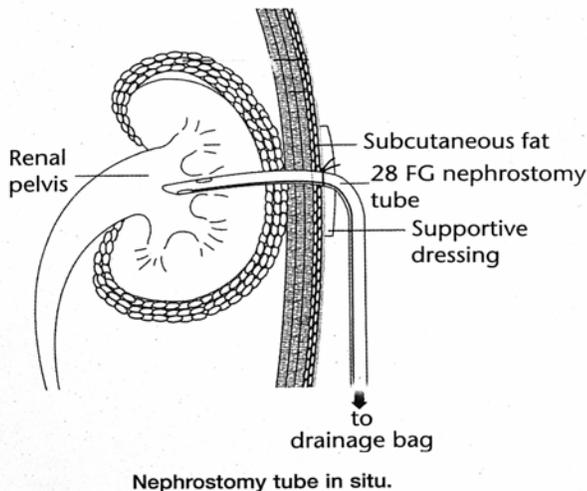


*GOING HOME WITH A
NEPHROSTOMY TUBE
PATIENT INFORMATION*

This booklet has been designed to help you learn how to manage your nephrostomy tube when you are at home. Feel free to discuss any issues and questions you may have with the medical and nursing staff looking after you.

Why go home with a Nephrostomy Tube?



Adapted from Urological Nursing
(2004, p.115)

Sometimes it is necessary to leave a nephrostomy tube in the kidney for a longer period of time. The reason for this will be discussed with you.

When you are discharged with a nephrostomy tube, your nurse will arrange ongoing care.

The nephrostomy tube will be changed every three months if you have one long-term. This will be done at the hospital and will be arranged by your doctors

A District Nurse will visit you at home and change the dressing around the tube. You will also be supplied with new drainage bags as necessary.

Managing your Nephrostomy Tube at Home

The following are the guidelines you are advised to follow:

Hygiene

You should always wash your hands thoroughly before and after the following:

- Emptying the drainage bag
- Changing the drainage bag
- Any time when the nephrostomy tube is handled



General care

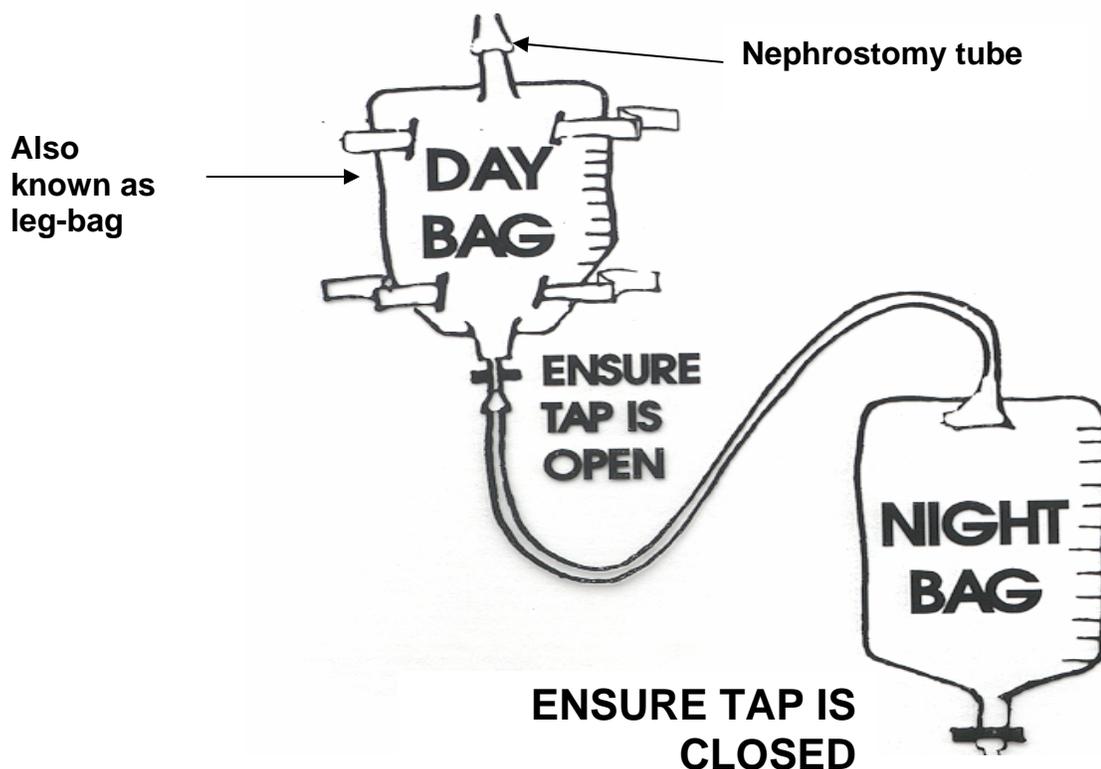
- If you have a waterproof dressing over your nephrostomy tube insertion site, you may shower when you wish (you should not soak the dressing area in a bath). The District Nurse will visit you to change this type of dressing approximately 3 times a week.
- Occasionally, waterproof dressings cause skin irritation. If this happens to you, the District Nurse will choose another type of dressing.
- Do not use creams or ointments around the nephrostomy site unless your doctor has prescribed them.
- Preferably wear a leg-bag during the day. This will prevent you from stepping on the tubing. If you choose to use a large drainage bag during the day, pin it to your clothing.
- Empty the drainage bag regularly – it will become heavy when full.

DO NOT LET THE DRAINAGE BAG DRAG ON THE FLOOR

Overnight drainage

If you are using a leg-bag during the day, you will need to connect a larger drainage bag for the night (remember to keep the protective cap in a clean, dry place to be reapplied to night-bag after cleaning).

The night-bag tubing connects at the tap of the bottom of the leg-bag. Your nurse will show you how to do this – do not hesitate to ask for help. As the night-bag tubing is longer, it is important to check that there aren't any kinks in it or urine will be unable to drain. NB - Do not disconnect the leg-bag from the nephrostomy tube.



The night-bag extension should be placed LOWER than your bed. The night-bag may be placed flat on the floor on a clean towel or in a bucket.

Cleaning the Night-bag

When you disconnect the night-bag it will need to be emptied, cleaned and stored in a dry place.

For cleaning you will need a bowl (or sink) containing warm water and detergent eg. washing-up liquid.

How to wash the night-bag:

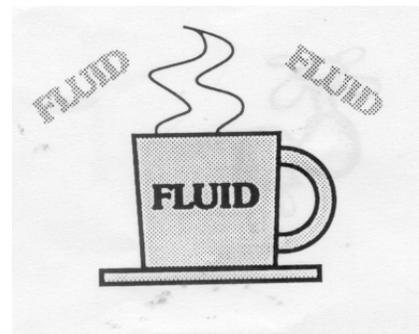
- Empty the urine from the night-bag down the toilet.
- Wash the inside and outside of the drainage bag with the warm, soapy water and then rinse with warm water to clear the soap.
- After rinsing, shake off excess water and dry the outside of the night-bag with a clean towel or disposable paper towel. Recap the end of the tubing. Store the clean night-bag in a clean and dry place (eg. ice-cream container with a lid). Do not leave the night-bag soaking in a solution as this will damage the bag.

How long does a drainage bag last?

Your District Nurse will supply you with bags approximately every two weeks. Drainage bags only need to be changed if they leak, become discoloured, or smell.

Promoting Drainage

Unless your doctor has told you otherwise, you are advised to drink at least 2 litres of fluid a day. This is equal to about 8-10 cups. Aim to have your urine a light yellow colour. A high fluid intake will promote drainage and reduce the risk of infection in the kidney or blockage of the nephrostomy tubing by debris.



At times you may notice some debris or floating particles in your urine. This is usually due to crystals or salts in the urine – you should drink more fluid.

What if the Nephrostomy Leaks?

If your nephrostomy tube is not draining you may experience pain in your side and/or leakage of urine onto the dressing. If you experience leakage, check the following:

- Is the nephrostomy tubing securely connected to the drainage bag tubing?
- Is the nephrostomy or drainage tubing free of kinks?
- Has the drainage bag been kept lower than the kidney?

If you have answered ‘yes’ to all of the above questions and it is during the day, contact your District Nurse as your nephrostomy tube may be blocked and will need to be checked and redressed. If leakage occurs at night, contact your GP (family doctor) as the District Nurse is not available at this time.

Recognising Infection

Infection is a possible complication from having a nephrostomy tube in place. This is because the nephrostomy tube provides a way for bacteria to enter the kidney.

You can reduce the risk of infection by:

- Drinking plenty of fluid
- Thorough handwashing before and after touching the nephrostomy tube or bag
- Cleaning the over-night drainage bags as instructed

Signs of infection to watch out for:

- Do you feel unwell – tired, loss of appetite, vomiting?
- Do you have a fever, “shivering”, or chills?
- Do you have pain over the kidney or bladder?
- Do you have pain or aching in your back?
- Is your urine cloudy or does it have an offensive odour?
- Is there blood in your urine?

If you have some or all of these signs and symptoms, contact your GP IMMEDIATELY as they indicate that you may have a urinary tract infection.

Supplies

When you are discharged from hospital your hospital nurse will provide you with a spare day-bag and night-bag.

If you go away on holiday, please remember to inform your District Nurse and arrange to take any supplies you may need with you.

3 References: Mosby's Genitourinary Disorders, Clinical Nursing, Mikel Gray 1992
Urological Nursing 3rd Edition, Urological Nursing' 2004
Campbell's Urology 7th Edition, Urology, 1998