

CARING FOR YOUR PERCUTANEOUS NEPHROSTOMY TUBE

A percutaneous nephrostomy tube is placed into your kidney to help divert the urine from that kidney. The urinary system is made up of organs that produce urine, the kidney, and eliminate it from the body. The kidneys are the organs that produce the urine. Connected to each kidney is a tube-like structure called the ureter which carries the urine from the kidneys to the bladder. If urine cannot pass from the kidney through the ureter into the bladder, a percutaneous nephrostomy tube is placed to remove the urine directly from the kidney.

Caring for your percutaneous nephrostomy tube

The tube is placed directly into your kidney at your flank. Your nurse will teach you and your helper how to care for your percutaneous nephrostomy tube. The nurse will demonstrate and explain dressing and drainage equipment changes and then should observe you and your helper performing these tasks. Arrangements should be made for a visiting nurse to come to your home. Talk to your primary care physician about this.

Frequently asked questions

Can I shower?

You may shower. However, unless you plan to change the dressing immediately after the shower, be careful not to get the dressing wet.

May I exercise?

Yes, you may. Walking and gardening are acceptable activities. Do not make movements which involve aggressive stretching from side to side or constant bending because this may dislodge the percutaneous nephrostomy tube. Check with your doctor if you have any doubts about how much, how often or what type of exercise you may perform.

What if urine does not drain from the catheter?

Check that the tubing is not kinked. Make sure that articles of clothing are not pinching off the catheter or the tubing, which is connected to the drainage bag.

CARING FOR YOUR PERCUTANEOUS NEPHROSTOMY TUBE (continued)

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- A lot of sediment or particles in the urine
- Nausea
- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Decrease in the amount of urine or absence of urine in the collection bag
- Sudden or increased back pain
- A tube which has come out
- Leakage of urine around the insertion site
- Bloody, cloudy or foul smelling urine

Will people know I have a percutaneous nephrostomy tube?

No one will know you have a tube. Clothing can be adjusted so that the leg bag and catheter are not visible.

How often should I empty the leg bag?

You should empty the leg bag every 3 to 4 hours.

What if I need help at home?

A visiting nurse service referral will be made for you by your referring physician. This visiting nurse will be able to help you with your home care needs until you and your helper are able to manage independently.

Can I return to work?

The catheter will not limit your ability to work. It is important to discuss with your doctor when it would be best for you to return to work.

If you have any questions about the care of your percutaneous nephrostomy tube, please contact the Division of Vascular and Interventional Radiology at 516-562-4834, weekdays from 8 AM to 5 PM. If you have an emergency after 5 PM or on the weekend, call your doctor or call 516-562-0100 and ask the operator to page the Radiologist on call.