



URINE COLLECTION BAGS



Urine collection bags are attached to the end of a catheter to collect urine as it flows from the bladder until a convenient time for emptying.

They are connected to the catheter by pushing the tapered end of the collection bag tube firmly into the funnel end of the catheter.

Most men use two types



Straps

A small bag that is worn discreetly on the thigh or lower leg - well hidden under clothing. These are called 'leg bags'.

A larger bag (2 litres +) that has a longer connecting tube and hangs at the side of the bed or on a stand. These are called 'night bags'.



You may be sent home with only the large collection bags that were used in hospital. However, these large bags can interfere with activities, especially as you recover from surgery and become more mobile and active.

You can contact your healthcare professional and ask for smaller leg-worn bags. In the UK they are available on prescription.

LEG BAGS

Capacity: There are several sizes - 250ml to 750ml. The smaller bags offer greater discreetness but they need emptying more often than the larger bags.

Attaching your leg bag

- Use either a pair of elastic/silicone straps usually supplied with the bag. **Be careful not to pull the straps too tightly around the leg.**
- Or a mesh stocking with a specially-designed pocket to hold the leg bag.
- Men often use both - leg bags get heavy as they fill up!

Tips from men:

“Tuck the tap into your sock for additional discreetness and security”

“Wrap gauze around it to catch drips”

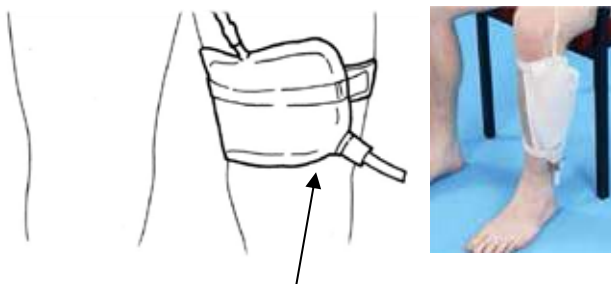
“Alternate your bags between legs”

Positioning your leg bag

Whether a bag is worn high or low on the leg is personal choice. Some men find it more convenient to wear the bag higher on the leg and to lower their trousers to empty the bag.

Others find it easier to wear the bag low on the leg and to raise the bottom of their trouser leg to empty.

Wherever you choose to position your bag, it is important that the bag is **lower than your bladder**, so that the urine can flow freely from your bladder. If you are sitting for long periods it may be best if it is worn below the knee to aid drainage.



A small, discreet thigh bag holds approx. 400mls.

NIGHT BAGS

Night bags should be positioned lower than the bed to aid free flow of urine into the bag. They should be hung on special floor stands (provided by the bag supplier), or on furniture. This will allow urine to pass freely into the bag and reduce the chance of infection.

If you don't have a stand, place your night bag in a bucket. **Bags should not touch the floor.**

Tips from men:

"You can improvise by putting a strong coat hanger under the mattress with only the hook showing, on which the night bag can hang at the side of the bed"

"I hung mine on my bedside table drawer knob"

Which bags should I use overnight? It is possible to use a leg bag when you are in bed. It should be left secured to the leg as in the daytime to prevent tugging on the catheter.

Leg bags have limited capacity and you are likely to have to get up in the night to empty your bag. For this reason, many men prefer the additional capacity of a night bag when in bed.

Create a '**link system**' by plugging the night bag into the tap of the leg bag. Urine then drains through the leg bag into the night bag.

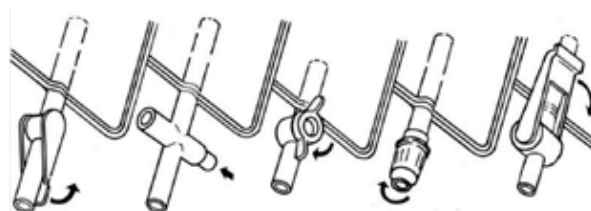
Don't forget to open the leg bag tap after connecting the night bag.

Emptying collection bags

As leg bags fill, they become heavy and uncomfortable to wear and can slip down the leg. Do not let your bag become too full and empty it when it is half or three quarters full.

Remember to close the tap after emptying to prevent wet feet!

Night bags should also be emptied or disposed of (if they don't have a tap) when they become full or in the morning.



Different tap designs

Some bags have taps that you twist or slide to open or close, others have a lever mechanism. If you find the tap on your bag difficult to open or close, ask your healthcare professional for a different type.

Follow these steps to good hand hygiene guidelines when emptying your bag:

1. Wash your hands before emptying the bag.
2. The tap at the bottom of the bag can be held over the toilet and opened. If you find this difficult, you can empty the bag into a container and then pour into the toilet.
3. Remember to close the tap again after emptying.
4. Wash your hands when you are finished.

When should urine collection bags be changed?

Leg bags are usually changed about every 7 days. You will be shown how to do this or your nurse may change it for you. The bag may be changed sooner if it is damaged or becomes difficult to empty or uncomfortable to wear. Night drainage bags should be thrown away after one use.

Ask your healthcare professional how often your collection bags should be changed, as guidance differs between products and countries. You will be given some spare bags when you leave hospital. When at home, ask your healthcare professional for more supplies.

Always aim to follow the manufacturer's instructions which will be on the packaging.

Always use the link system
DO NOT disconnect the leg bag from the catheter to insert the night bag.



Changing your collection bag

Disconnecting the catheter from the bag should be kept to a minimum, preferably only when they are being changed.

When the catheter and drainage bag are connected this creates a sealed, one-way, **closed drainage system**. The connection between the catheter and drainage bag is watertight, and drainage bags have non-return valves that prevent urine from flowing back along the catheter and into your bladder. This helps to reduce the risk of infection in your bladder.

Connecting a night bag to the tap of a leg bag (in a 'link' system) rather than directly to the catheter reduces the number of times the catheter is disconnected.

Always remember good hand hygiene:

1. Wash your hands properly before touching the connection.
2. Clean the connection thoroughly before disconnecting, preferably with alcohol wipes.
3. Reconnect as quickly as possible with a new sterile bag.
4. Wash your hands again after disconnecting.

If your catheter and drainage bag become disconnected accidentally - do not panic!

Pinch the end of the catheter and bend the tubing (to stop the urine leaking). If you have a new sterile bag handy connect it. If not just re-connect the original bag as soon as possible.

You are only likely to need a catheter and collection bag for one to three weeks.

If you should need a catheter for longer than this you may wish to review different bags and features available on the Continence Product advisor website (below).

Suppliers usually send sample packs on request if you phone or email their customer.

For more detail about collection bags, where to get them and tips from men go to:

www.continenceproductadvisor.org