



## What is a catheter valve?

A catheter valve is a tap-like device that is connected directly to the end of a urinary catheter (urethral or suprapubic). This can be attached to a urinary drainage bag, so that the valve lies between the end of the catheter and the drainage bag. The tap may be switched on or off to drain urine from the bladder, or to stop drainage.

## Why use a catheter valve?

- To help maintain bladder function, tone and good capacity
- It can be more discreet than leg bags
- Maintaining the bladder function of storage is useful if your catheter might be removed in the future.

## When to open your catheter valve

- Your nurse should first show you how to open your catheter valve and discuss with you how frequently to empty your bladder
- Open your valve when you feel the sensation to pass urine
- Try not to store more than 400-450mls in your bladder.

## Changing your catheter valve

- You should change your valve every five to seven days
- Always wash your hands before and after changing your catheter valve
- If changed by a relative or other carer, they should wash their hands, put on non-sterile gloves, remove the old valve and replace it with the new sterile valve from the packet, without touching the

end attaching to the catheter

- Do not touch the end connecting to the catheter
- If a drainage bag is required for some part of the day or night, it can be attached to the end of the catheter valve by pushing the bag's connector into the outlet of the valve
- Then open the valve to allow urine to drain into the bag. The bag should be either secured onto the leg if it is a leg bag, or put onto a catheter stand if it is a night bag
- Discard the old valve in your rubbish bin.

## How to wear your catheter valve

Your valve may be tucked into your underwear, or supported with a catheter leg strap or retainer strap.

## Storage of unopened catheter valves

- Store them in a clean, cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight
- Do not use if packaging has been damaged
- Your nurse will arrange home delivery of your catheter valve if required.

## Daily hygiene

- Wash the area where the catheter enters your body every day
- If your catheter enters your urethra, use mild soap and water
- If you have a suprapubic catheter, use cooled boiled water
- You may still have a bath or shower when using a catheter valve.

## Fluids and bowels

- Aim to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid a day (unless you have been advised otherwise by a healthcare professional)
- Try to avoid constipation – make sure that you include plenty of fruit and vegetables in your diet.

## Call for help if

- You are in pain
- Your catheter is not draining
- You think your catheter is blocked
- Urine continues to leak around your catheter
- You see blood in your urine
- Your urine smells and it appears cloudy – you may have an infection.

## Who to contact for help

Your GP, district nurse or local continence nurse.