

**Patient
Information**

Leaving hospital with a nephrostomy tube

Introduction

This information is for patients who have had a nephrostomy tube inserted into one or both of their kidneys. The leaflet answers the commonly asked questions, gives information about aftercare and provides contact information for when you need help and advice.

What is a nephrostomy?

A nephrostomy is a procedure to insert a tube into the kidneys to drain away the urine they make to a bag outside the body.

Urine is made in the kidneys and then travels down a thin pipe (the ureter) to the bladder. If this pipe is blocked, urine cannot leave the kidneys. If untreated, this can cause the kidneys to become damaged and you to feel unwell. A nephrostomy is a thin, hollow tube, which is placed through the skin on your back and into your blocked kidney to drain the urine out.

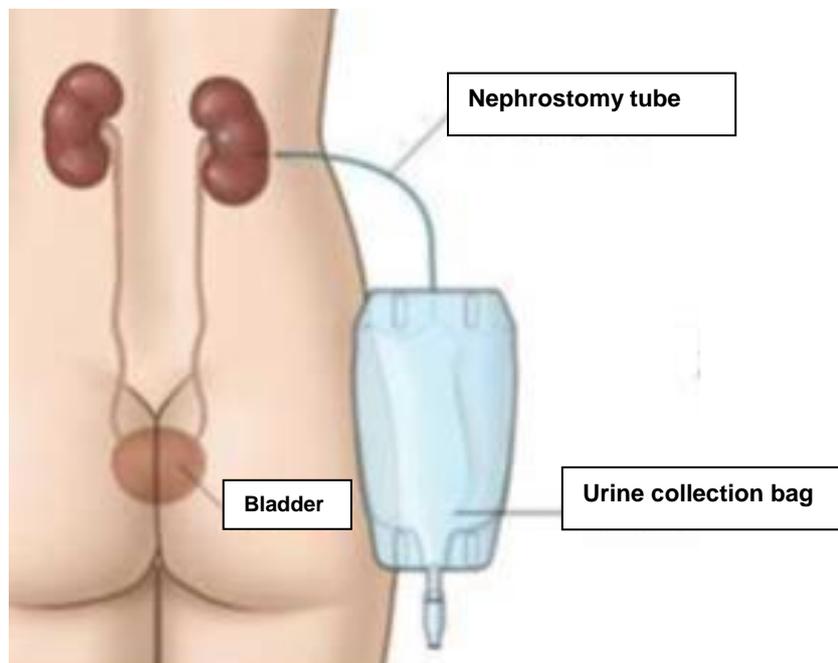


Figure 1: A diagram to show a nephrostomy tube draining urine from the kidney, to a collection bag outside the body

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The end of the tube which sits in the kidney has a coil which looks like a pig's tail, to help hold it in place. The other end of the tube is fixed in a special dressing on the skin, designed to hold the tube in place. A see-through dressing is placed over the top.

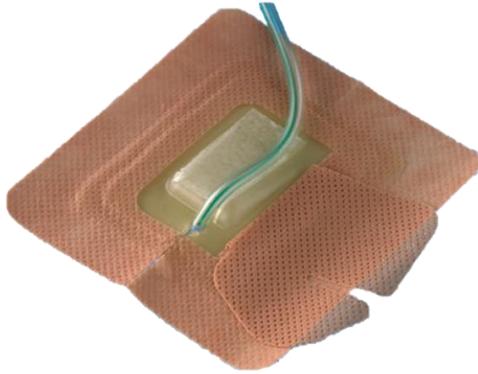


Figure 2: A picture of the dressing, holding the tube in place on the skin

Urine will automatically drain from the kidney and out through the nephrostomy. There is a connector tube so that it will drain into the urine collection bag.

The collection bag can be easily emptied into a toilet when it is convenient. The bag can be discreetly hidden from view by strapping it to your leg underneath your clothes. The collection bag will need to be changed weekly.



Figure 3: An example of a urine collection bag

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Sometimes urine can still pass down into the bladder via the normal route. This is less likely if you have a nephrostomy in both kidneys.

How do I look after my nephrostomy at home?

You should:

- Empty the bag regularly during the day and do not allow it to become over full.
- Try to keep the nephrostomy tube clean and dry. The clear dressing allows you to shower safely.
- Change the connector tube and urine bag as you have been advised. Community nurses can support you with this.

Avoid:

Swimming and having a bath as this can increase the risk of getting an infection.

Possible problems

Blocked nephrostomy tube

Sometimes small bits of sediment can cause a blockage to the thin nephrostomy tube. To help prevent this happening, you need to drink at least 2 litres of fluid each day. Blockages can usually be sorted in hospital by flushing the tube but may need additional treatments.

If you suspect that this may have happened you must seek help. Not draining any urine for over 2 hours is considered a potential emergency, so please DO NOT eat anything and seek urgent advice.

Infections

All breaks in the skin can lead to an increased risk of infection. If you follow the care instructions this is less likely to happen but if you have any of the symptoms below you must seek urgent advice.

- A fever
- Pain around your back which is not controlled by over the counter medication such as paracetamol
- The skin around the nephrostomy is red or hot.

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Blood in the nephrostomy bag

Seeing blood in the urine bag is very common as the nephrostomy tube rubs on the inside of the kidney. Minor bleeding without any other symptoms does not require any treatment but please seek urgent advice if:

- The urine is similar in colour to red wine
- The nephrostomy stops draining
- There are blood clots in the urine.

The nephrostomy falls out

The tube can rarely fall out but if this happens you must go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department immediately.

Who can I contact for advice?

Urology Assessment Unit

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 4358

Open every day, 8:00am to 6:00pm

Guiting Ward

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 3857

NHS 111

Tel: 111

Alternatively you can contact your specialist nurse or community nurse.

Further information

For more information about the procedure to insert nephrostomy tubes please visit:

The British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS)

Website:

www.baus.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Percutaneous%20nephrostomy.pdf

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