

Female Indwelling Catheter

An indwelling catheter is also called a Foley catheter or "Foley." It can be used in males or females. A Foley is usually left in the bladder and drains the bladder continuously. This lesson will review how to insert a Foley catheter. Some of the photos in this lesson show the use of gloves. It is not necessary to use gloves when doing this on yourself; however if you have a helper in the home/community setting, they may choose to wear them.

Foley Catheter: Step-by-Step Process

1. Gather the supplies.

- Indwelling Foley catheter tray with a 10 cc balloon. (Size 16fr is a common size used for adults). The tray comes with all the needed supplies.
- Syringe to deflate the balloon of the existing catheter (if there is one already in the bladder)
- Soapy wash cloth and wet wash cloth

2. Wash hands with soap and water.

3. Prepare all needed supplies.

4. Lie flat on back with legs flat.

5. If there is already a catheter in place, remove it by deflating the balloon (the balloon is what holds the catheter in place inside the bladder).

- Attach the syringe to the end of the "Y" pigtail (side port).
- Withdraw the plunger of the syringe. This will deflate the balloon on the catheter inside the bladder. (The balloon is what holds the catheter in place inside the bladder.)
- You will know it is completely deflated when you are unable to pull any more water into the syringe.



6. Gently pull the catheter out from the bladder.

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7. Wash urinary opening. Wash with the soapy cloth and rinse with the wet cloth. Dry thoroughly.



8. Wash hands again.

9. Open the indwelling catheter tray carefully. Set up the supplies.

- Place paper pad under hips.
- Put on the gloves if this is not a self-catheterization.
- Pour the Betadine onto the cotton balls.
- Remove the plastic cover from the catheter (be careful not to touch the catheter tube) and squirt the lubricating jelly onto the catheter.
- Remove the rubber cap from the syringe with the water in it.
- Connect the end of the catheter to the drainage bag.



10. Choose your "clean" and "dirty" hand. Whatever hand comes in contact with the body, the hand that holds the labia, is dirty. The one that touches the catheter supplies is clean. Never mix clean and dirty hands in regard to the catheter supplies. It is important that this procedure stay "super clean" so as not to allow germs to enter the bladder.

11. Using one hand, spread the labia open so you can find the urinary opening. This hand is now your "dirty" hand. Do not use it to touch supplies in the kit.



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12. Clean urinary opening.

- Use clean hand to touch items in the kit.
- Clean urinary area with the cotton balls soaked in Betadine.
- Use one cotton ball per wipe.
- Always wipe from the top of the area towards the bottom.
- Never re-use a cotton ball.

13. Insert the catheter slowly and gently into the urinary opening.



14. See the urine flow into the catheter. Continue to insert the catheter slowly for another 2 inches.

15. Blow up the balloon. While holding the catheter in place, attach the pre-filled syringe in the kit to the "Y" pigtail port and insert all of the water from the syringe.

If it is easier, you can attach the syringe before you insert the catheter so it is ready when you need it. Do not blow up the balloon until the catheter is in and you see urine flowing.

Never blow up the balloon until you see flowing urine inside the catheter.



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Below is a picture of a catheter with an inflated balloon. This is what it would look like inside the bladder.



16. Wash off the extra Betadine from the urinary area.

17. Always hang/attach the drainage bag to chair/bed frame below the level of the bladder.
This will allow for the best drainage.

18. Consider wearing a leg strap. The leg strap attaches the catheter to the inner thigh. It helps to keep the catheter secure.

19. If wearing a leg bag, always wear it below the knee.

20. Clean around the catheter and urethra daily.

- Use unscented antibacterial soap and water.
- Dry the area carefully.
- Wash area after each bowel movement.

Real Questions from Real People

1. How often does the catheter need to be changed?

Catheters can stay in for about a month as long as it is not leaking or having crusty areas around it near the urethral opening. You should wash the urinary opening at least twice a day while the catheter is in place. Change the catheter by the schedule given to you by your doctor.

2. Should I save anything from the catheter kit in case problems arise with the catheter?

Yes. Save the syringe so you can deflate the balloon when the catheter needs to be removed.

3. What if touch the catheter with my dirty hand or I drop the catheter on the floor before I have it safely inserted?

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Stop and get another catheter or kit. It is important that germs do not enter the bladder during this procedure.

4. What if I have spasms while the catheter is being inserted?

Stop and wait for the spasm to pass; then continue with the insertion.

5. What if the catheter will not go in easily or I feel like I meet resistance when inserting it?

Do not force the catheter in. Call the doctor for further advice.

6. What if I accidentally insert the catheter into the vagina instead of the urethra?

Start over and use a new kit. Don't feel bad. Sometimes this happens.