

What is a nephrostomy?

A nephrostomy is a tube (catheter) used to drain urine. It is placed into the kidney through the skin. The tube is:

- Put in during surgery and held in place with stitches.
- Used when the ureters (tubes that connect the kidney and bladder) get blocked and cannot drain urine.
- Most often in place for a short time. The tube may need to be changed every 8 weeks if left in longer.

What happens during surgery?

The surgery most often takes place in Interventional Radiology. This is a special part of the X-ray department.

The tube may be placed:

- By a doctor who is trained in pediatric radiology. They will use X-rays or ultrasound that show the kidney, ureter and bladder.
- By a surgeon to allow the kidney to drain while it heals.

How should I care for my child after surgery?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some guidelines include:

- Check the area around the tube each day for signs of infection. Call the doctor if you notice any of these:
 - Increased drainage
 - Redness
 - Warmth
 - Swelling
- Give your child antibiotics (medicines to help prevent or fight infection) as ordered by the doctor.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol or less costly store brand) for discomfort or irritability. Follow the directions on the label carefully, or ask your child's doctor how much medicine to give. Do not give your child more than 5 doses of acetaminophen in 24 hours.
- Have your child drink lots of fluids and eat healthy foods to help with healing.

Care of your child's dressing and tube

- Keep the area around the tube clean and dry. Give your child sponge baths.
- Make sure there are no kinks, twists or clamps in the tube to stop the flow of urine.
- Flush the tube every day as advised by the doctor.
- If the dressing comes off, put a new dressing around the tube as advised by the doctor.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Nephrostomy care, continued

Watch for signs that may mean the tube needs to be replaced. Call your child's doctor if the tube:

- Stops draining.
- Has leaking around it.
- Breaks.
- Falls out.

Care of your child's drainage bag

- Wash your hands well for at least 20 seconds before and after emptying the bag.
- Drain the urine from the bag every 4 to 6 hours. This helps prevent the weight of the bag from pulling on the tube.
- Wash the drainage bag with warm, soapy water as needed. Rinse well.
- Keep the bag and tubing below the level of the kidney, or where the tube comes out of the back, as if you are keeping the bag in a backpack. This helps make sure the urine drains by gravity and does not back up in to the kidney.

What else do I need to know?

- Limit your child's normal activities for 2 to 3 weeks.
 - Have them do quiet things, such as reading, coloring or watching TV.
 - Do not let them run, jump or climb. Doing these things could move the tube out of place.
- After the tube is removed, have your child avoid contact sports, such as football, basketball or soccer, until your child's doctor says it is OK.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor **right away** if your child has:

- Signs of infection, such as increased redness, swelling or bad-smelling drainage where the tube is.
- A fever over 101°F.
- Pain not helped by medicine ordered by the doctor

Also call **right away** if:

- The tube comes out.
- The tube quits draining.
- Urine drains around the catheter.

Call your child's doctor anytime you have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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