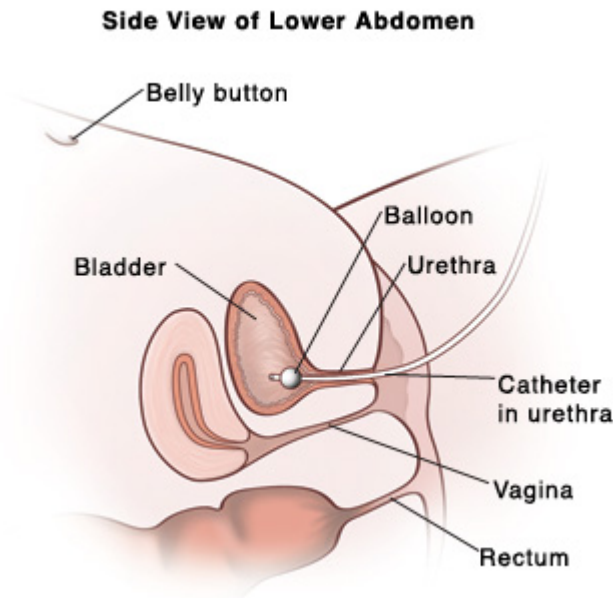


When Your Child Needs a Foley Catheter — Girl



A Foley catheter (also called an indwelling catheter) is a soft, thin, flexible tube placed in the bladder to drain urine. The procedure to place the catheter can be done in an operating room, exam room, or hospital room. You may be able to stay with your child during the placement.

Gender words are used here to talk about anatomy and health risk. Please use this information in a way that works best for you and your provider as you talk about your care.

Why is a Foley catheter needed?

Urine is liquid waste that the kidneys make. Urine flows from the kidneys into the bladder to be stored. The bladder is located in the lower belly (abdomen). The urethra carries urine from the bladder out of the body. The opening of the urethra is near the vagina. Your child may need a Foley catheter if:

- They can't get up and use the toilet because of an injury, surgery, or illness.
- They are taking medicines that may cause them to have trouble emptying her bladder.
- A healthcare provider needs to measure the amount of urine your child passes.

How is a Foley catheter placed in your child?

- Your child lies on their back on an exam table or a hospital bed. Their legs are spread apart and bent at the knees.
- Your child can have a comfort item, such as a stuffed animal, with them if the procedure is done in an exam room or a hospital room.

- If you're present during the procedure, you can help by holding your child's hand or distracting them.
- The healthcare provider washes their hands and puts on sterile gloves.
- The catheter is prepared for insertion. One end of the catheter has a balloon. The other end has 2 ports. One port is used to inflate the balloon with water. The other port is connected to a bag that collects urine.
- Lubricating gel is applied to the end of the catheter that has the balloon. This is so that the catheter can slide through the urethra easily.
- A sterile sheet is used to cover the lower part of your child's body.
- The provider gently holds open the entrance to your child's urethra. This may be uncomfortable for your child. But it's very important for your child to stay still.
- The urethra opening is cleansed.
- The provider gently inserts the catheter into the urethra until it reaches the bladder. The urethra is often hard to find in girls. So it may take more than one try to place the catheter. If the catheter is accidentally placed into the vagina, it may be left there briefly. This is just to mark where not to insert a new catheter on the next try. The provider removes the first catheter from the vagina as soon as they correctly insert the catheter into your child's urethra.
- The provider inserts water into the catheter to inflate the balloon. The balloon keeps the catheter in place in the bladder. The pressure from the balloon may cause your child to feel as though they need to pass urine. This feeling lasts only a short time.
- When the catheter is in place, urine flows out of the bladder and drains into a bag. The bag often hangs from the side of the bed.
- Nursing staff will empty your child's urine bag regularly. The staff will remove the catheter when your child no longer needs it.

How to help your child get ready

If you know that your child will need a Foley catheter during a hospital stay, you can help by preparing them in advance. How you do this depends on your child's needs.

- Explain what will happen during the procedure in short and simple terms.
- Make sure your child understands that the healthcare provider will be touching your child's private area. Reassure your child that this is part of the procedure.
- The procedure may cause some mild pain. But the catheter won't hurt once it's in place.
- Your child may feel nervous or afraid. They may even cry. Let your child know that you'll be in the room with them, or nearby, if they need you.
- Many hospitals have a child life specialist. This person is specially trained to help children understand what to expect during their time in the hospital. Books, videos, dolls, and toys may be used to help explain the procedure to your child. Be sure to ask your child's healthcare provider about the resources available at your child's hospital.

Risks and possible complications

There is a small chance of infection (urinary tract infection or local infection in the genital area) when a Foley catheter is placed. It's important to keep the catheter site as clean as possible to prevent infection.