

External Catheters for Adults

- External catheters (also known as condom catheters) adhere to the penis in a similar manner to condoms. The external catheter is then attached to a catheter bag.
- They are ideal for night time use and more comfortable, have less complications and are less restrictive than indwelling catheters.
- External catheters should not be used to collect urine samples.
- External catheters are latex or silicone.

External catheter types include self-adhering and two-piece catheters:

- Two-piece catheters include a condom sheath style with double sided adhesive foam being directly applied to the penis as well as a condom sheath style with single side adhesive that is wrapped over the catheter once it is placed on the penis.
- Consider using the condom sheath style with single sided adhesive if the catheter must be removed frequently.
- Retracted Penis Pouch: one- to two-day extended wear time for men with retracted penile incontinence.



Figure 1.

External catheters should be changed at least every 24 – 48 hours or according to manufacturer recommendations or when:

- The patient wishes to have a bath or shower
- The catheter is loose
- The penile skin is irritated, itchy or painful
- A urine odor is noticeable

Considerations for application:

- To ensure the catheter adheres properly, ensure the penis is clean, dry and free of hair.
- Consider the use of a skin barrier product to protect the skin.

Caution:

- Urinary leakage may occur with increasing patient mobility.
- Condom could become twisted or kink,

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- The sheath could fall off;
- Regular monitoring is essential.
- Use non latex external catheter options if patient is sensitive to latex products.

Contraindications

- Break in skin integrity (i.e. contact dermatitis)
- Cognitive understanding
- Allergy to adhesives

Assessment

The external catheter must be sized appropriately to ensure comfortable fit while preventing leakage.

- Measurements must be completed using the penis measuring guide with the patient in the lying, sitting and standing positions, if applicable.
- The penis shaft needs to be at least 2 cm long from proximal to the glans without retracting the foreskin if the man is uncircumcised.
 - If less than 2 cm, use retracted penis pouch.
- If the catheter sheath is too tight, it acts as a tourniquet and can restrict blood and urine flow to the penis.
- If the catheter sheath is too loose, it can crease on the penis or cause urinary leakage.

External Catheter Trouble Shooting Table

Catheter Problem	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Pressure on shaft of penis	Condom is too small. Pressure from adhesive strip/tape is too strong.	Select a larger size condom. Adhesive strip/tape should not be applied circular but following a spiral pattern.
Pressure sore at the foreskin	Pressure from the condom is too high (e.g. due to an erection).	Unroll the urinary sheath 4 to 6 cm to ensure that there is sufficient space (3cm) between the foreskin and the tip of the condom.
Leg bag problems (e.g. urine flow disruption)	Unsecured/improperly positioned leg bag. Catheter is trapped under garment. Clothing is too tight. Tube is too long/kinked.	Wear loose clothing. Check tube for kinks etc. Adjust tube length Secure leg bag. Replace drainage bag.
External Catheter is leaking	Condom is not proper fit Ensure hair is not caught between condom and skin	Re-measure and select correct size. Trim pubic hair

Connecting tube slipping or skin irritation	Connecting tube and male external catheter may be incompatible Sensitivity, consider allergy	Choose compatible material Tighten connections Replace condom with a different material.
Skin too damp	Ensure skin is dry after bath/shower	Wait 30 minutes after bath/shower before applying condom.