

---

## 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 (the tubes that connect the kidney and bladder) get blocked and cannot drain urine.
- Used for a short time.

## How do I prepare my child for surgery?

### Babies

You can help your baby feel more secure while waiting for surgery if you:

- Bring a special blanket, toy or pacifier.
- Rock them, and comfort them with your presence and voice.
- Bring their favorite bottle for use after surgery when the doctor allows.

### Toddlers and preschoolers

- Young children can get anxious about surgery. The best time to talk with them is right before surgery.
- Use simple words, and be honest.
- Tell them you will stay with them as much as possible.
- Bring a favorite book, toy or blanket.
- Bring your child's favorite cup and snack for use after surgery when the doctor allows.

### School-age children

- It is important to be honest with school-age children. They may think something worse than what is really going to happen.
- Use simple words, and be honest. Try to tell them exactly what will happen.
- Tell them you will stay with them as much as possible.
- Bring along a favorite book, toy or game.
- Bring a favorite snack for use after surgery when the doctor allows.

## What happens during surgery?

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

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

# Nephrostomy care, continued

---

The tube may be placed:

- By a doctor who is trained in pediatric radiology. They will use the help of X-rays or ultrasound that show the kidney, ureter and bladder.
- By a surgeon during surgery 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 any signs of infection. This can include increased drainage, redness, warmth or swelling. Call the doctor if you notice any of these.
- Give your child antibiotics (medicines to help prevent or fight infections) 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 a 24-hour period.
- 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.
- Change the dressing around the tube as advised by the doctor. Some guidelines include:
  1. Wash your hands well with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds. You may also use an alcohol-based gel or foam if there is no visible dirt or grime on your hands.
  2. Gather these supplies:
    - New dressing
    - Warm water and soap
    - Clean washcloth
  3. While holding the tube down with your fingers, gently remove the adhesive tape and old dressing.
  4. Wash the skin around the tube with soap and water. Pat the area dry.
  5. Put on a new, dry dressing.
- 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 tube comes out, call your child's doctor **right away** so it can be replaced.

## 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 to prevent the weight of the bag from pulling on the tube.
- Wash the drainage bag with warm, soapy water, and rinse well as needed.

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

# Nephrostomy care, continued

---

## 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, 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 in the incision area
- Bloody, bad-smelling or cloudy urine
- 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.**

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