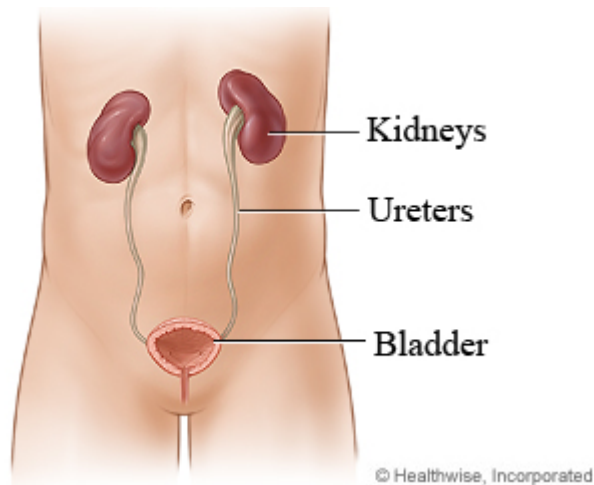


Neurogenic Bladder: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Neurogenic bladder is nerve damage that keeps the bladder from working properly. The damage can be caused by an injury or disease. You may find it hard to go to the bathroom when you need to. Or you may leak urine between bathroom visits.

Nerve damage in the brain, spinal cord, or elsewhere in the body can cause neurogenic bladder. Diseases that can lead to neurogenic bladder include Parkinson's disease, diabetes, and multiple sclerosis.

The treatment for neurogenic bladder depends on the cause. Sometimes you can solve the problem by changing your diet, doing exercises to keep urine from leaking, or learning how to control your bladder. You might be able to empty your bladder using a thin flexible tube called a catheter that you insert into the bladder. However, you may need medicine, surgery, or both.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take medicine as prescribed. If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- If a certain food seems to affect your bladder, stop eating it to see if the problem goes away.
- Do not smoke. It can irritate the bladder and cause bladder cancer. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Try bladder training. Set certain times to go to the bathroom, and slowly increase the time between bathroom visits. This may help lengthen the time your bladder can hold urine.
- Try pelvic floor (Kegel) exercises, which tighten and strengthen pelvic muscles. (If doing these exercises causes pain, stop doing them and talk with your doctor.) To do Kegel exercises:

- Squeeze your muscles as if you were trying not to pass gas. Or squeeze your muscles as if you were stopping the flow of urine. Your belly, legs, and buttocks shouldn't move.
 - Hold the squeeze for 3 seconds, then relax for 5 to 10 seconds.
 - Start with 3 seconds, then add 1 second each week until you are able to squeeze for 10 seconds.
 - Repeat the exercise 10 times a session. Do 3 to 8 sessions a day.
- Wash your pubic area with a mild soap. Avoid deodorant soaps or soaps with heavy perfumes.
 - Wear loose-fitting clothing that does not put pressure on your bladder.
 - Wear pads in your underwear to absorb urine leakage during treatment.
 - Consider joining a support group. Sharing your experiences with other people who have the same problem may help you learn more and cope better.

When should you call for help?



Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have a fever not caused by the flu or other illness.
- You have severe pain in your lower back.
- You have blood or pus in your urine.
- Your urine is cloudy or smells bad.
- You have pain or bleeding when you insert the catheter.
- You have swelling in your belly.
- You cannot urinate.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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