# NEPHROSTOMY CATHETER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

## HOW DO I CARE FOR THE TUBE?

- **1.** Empty the bag before it is completely full.
- 2. You cannot go swimming and/or cannot bath.

3. You can take a shower if you put a plastic covering, such as Saran Wrap, over the area.

**4.** The dressing should be changed every 3 days or when it gets soiled, wet, or loose. It is very important to wash your hands before removing the old dressing and then again before applying the new dressing.

# HOW DO I CHANGE THE DRESSING?

- 1. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water.
- 2. Assemble supplies: transparent dressing, gauze, tape, sterile normal saline, and drainage bag- if needed. Plastic bag or zip-lock bag for disposing of old dressing.
- **3.** Carefully remove the old dressing. Dispose of old dressing in the plastic or zip-lock bag. (Sometimes in order to keep the tube stable, a plastic platform is put where the tube comes through the skin. If this is done your nurse will teach you how to care for this device.)
- 4. Inspect the skin around the catheter. Note any unusual redness, tenderness, or drainage. (SEE PROBLEMS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE).
- 5. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- 6. Clean the skin at the tube site with gauze moistened with normal saline. Start at the tube site and work outward in a circular motion to cover a circle 3 to 4 inches in diameter. Discard the gauze. Let the tube site dry.
- 7. Cover the tube site with sterile gauze or transparent dressing.
- 8. Secure the tube in place with a piece of tape  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the exit site.
- 9. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

# **PROBLEMS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:**

### 1. The catheter becomes kinked.

- a. If it is only slightly kinked, straighten it out and redress it.
- **b.** If the kink is severe and/or there is a knot in the catheter, you need to make an appointment for a tube check.

## 2. The catheter stops draining into the bag. This may occur for 4 reasons.

- a. The catheter may be kinked, so check it when you change the dressing.
- b. The stopcock may be turned off, so check to make sure that it is open. When the knob is in line (parallel) with the catheter it is open.
- c. If you have done the above and it still does not drain, the catheter may be blocked or the catheter may have moved. Please call your doctor and make an appointment ASAP to get your tube checked.

#### 3. Skin rash.

If the skin under the tape becomes irritated, you may need to change the type of tape you are using. Call your supplies provider to change your tape order.

#### 4. Leakage around the catheter site.

Some clear to light yellow drainage around the catheter insertion site is to be expected for the first 1 to 3 days. If this drainage soaks through the dressing or becomes bloody or contains pus, please call your doctor for an appointment to check your tube ASAP.

#### 5. Pain.

- a. Some discomfort is to be expected for the first week after the insertion of a new catheter. Tylenol may help decrease the pain.
- b. If you suddenly develop pain, please call your primary physician and make an appointment to see him/her.

### 6. Fever.

If you get a fever for more than 12 hours, without another cause for the fever, such as a cold or flu, or if your urine becomes cloudy or bloodier, call your doctor. If your tube is draining internally, you may be instructed to connect the tube to a drainage bag.

# HOW DO I FLUSH THE NEPHROSTOMY TUBE ?

Flush the nephrostomy tube through the rubber stopper on the three-way stopcock attached to your nephrostomy drainage system. (A three-way stopcock is a plastic valve with three openings and a side arm that controls the direction of fluid through the device.) The third side (irrigation port) will have a rubber cap for flushing. All three-way stopcocks do not function the same way. Check the direction of fluid flow for the device you use. The flushing (irrigation) port should be in the OFF position when not in use. If your urine output stops, check the sidearm position and tube for kinks.

### **Flushing Procedure:**

- 1. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water.
- 2. Assemble supplies: 5 –10 ml syringe, vial adapter, alcohol swab, vial of preservative free normal saline
- 3. Snap off cap from the normal saline. Attach the vial adapter. Wipe the top with alcohol. Withdraw 5ml of normal saline into the syringe (DO NOT flush with more than 5 ml of normal saline unless directed by your doctor).
- 4. Turn the stopcock OFF to the drainage bag.
- 5. Swab the rubber injection port on the stopcock with another alcohol swab.
- 6. Insert the syringe into the injection port. Slowly push the normal saline. DO NOT pull back. If you cannot push in the saline, check the position of the stopcock sidearm and the tube for kinks. If you still cannot easily flush with normal saline, call your doctor.
- 7. Remove the syringe and dispose.
- 8. Point the stopcock sidearm towards the proper drainage position.
- 9. Check for urine in the tube or drainage bag.
- 10. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water

### Changing the drainage bag:

- 1. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water.
- 2. Assemble supplies: drainage bag, alcohol swabs, tape, securing straps
- 3. Disconnect the drainage bag from the tube
- 4. Swab the end of the nephrostomy tube
- 5. Connect a new bag
- 6. Secure the drainage bag to calf, thigh, or waist with tape or straps
- 7. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water