

Your Peritoneal Catheter

Placement and care after surgery

The peritoneum is the membrane that lines the inside of your abdomen. A peritoneal catheter is placed through this membrane.

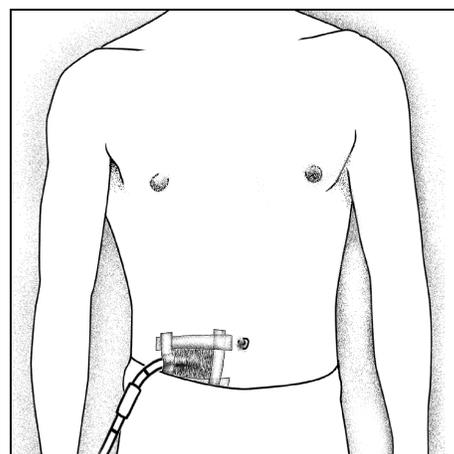
This handout explains how to take care of a peritoneal catheter. It also covers follow-up care and when to call your doctor.

What is a peritoneal catheter?

A *peritoneal catheter* is a small, flexible plastic tube that is placed inside your abdomen. It also has a piece that is outside your body. This piece is about 3 to 4 inches long and is about the thickness of a pencil. It is placed 3 to 4 inches to one side of your navel. It can be hidden by clothing.

Peritoneal dialysis (PD) is a way to remove waste products from your blood. Before you start PD, a peritoneal catheter must be placed by a surgeon or *nephrologist* (kidney doctor). Clean dialysis fluid is placed into your abdomen through the catheter. Waste collects in the fluid, then leaves your body through the catheter.

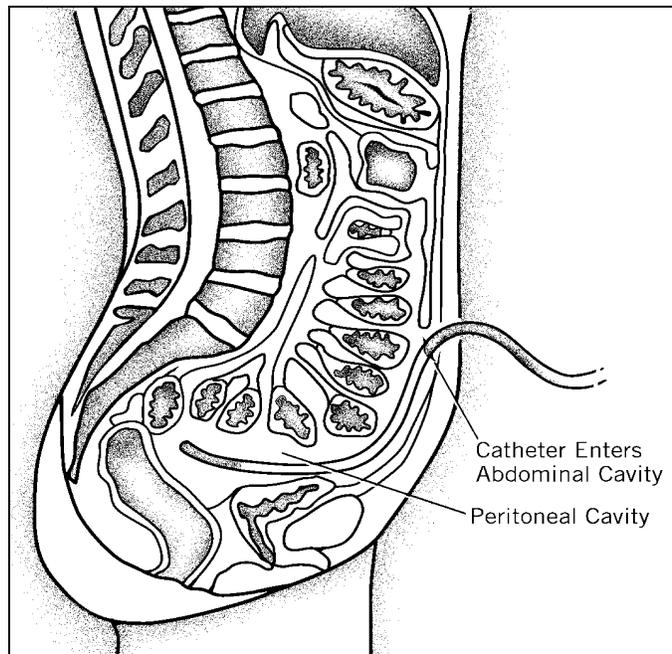
Most times, the peritoneal catheter is placed 2 to 3 weeks before you will start PD. This allows your surgical wounds to heal.



The catheter site

General Information

- Your catheter site will be red for 1 to 2 weeks after the catheter is placed.
- You may feel your catheter over your rectum. This is normal.
- Do not lift more than 10 pounds for 2 months after your catheter is placed.
- Avoid getting constipated. Your catheter may not work well if you are constipated. Your doctor can prescribe laxatives or stool softeners if you need them.



Cross-section of catheter and peritoneal cavity

Catheter Care

- After your catheter is placed, do **not** shower for 1 to 2 weeks or until the dialysis unit staff tells you it is OK. Keep the dressing and site dry. You may take sponge baths.
- Your surgical dressing should stay in place. If it becomes loose, you may tape it down. Your catheter should be taped securely to your abdomen at all times.
- **NEVER** use scissors on or near your catheter and dressing.
- Call your dialysis center if you have drainage larger than the size of a quarter on your surgical dressing.

Changing Your Dressing

The dialysis unit staff will change your dressing. If you must change the dressing because it is wet, dirty, or bloody, follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands well.
2. Gather the supplies you will need
 - Gauze dressings
 - Tape
 - Liquid soap
 - Clean towel

3. Carefully remove the old dressing and tape without pulling on your catheter.
4. Wash your hands again, this time for 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Place a clean new gauze dressing on top of the catheter where it leaves your body.
6. Tape the dressing and catheter to your abdomen so that it feels secure.

When to Call Your Doctor

Infection is the main complication of peritoneal catheters. Germs from your hands, mouth, and surroundings can get into your catheter and cause infection. This can make you very ill and may cause your catheter to fail.

Watch for these signs of infection:

- Fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher
- Chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Redness, warmth, drainage, pain, or swelling at the catheter site

Call your doctor right away if you think you might have an infection:

- Northwest Kidney Center patients, call..... **206.292.2285**
- Other patients, call

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Renal Nurse:

Call the call center at 206.598.2844 any time of day, 7 days a week

Call 206.598.9116 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or leave a voicemail after hours

HMC Renal Nurse:

Call 206.744.3541

Follow-up

You will need to go to your dialysis center within 3 days for a catheter flush and dressing change. Your Renal Nurse can help you schedule this appointment. At this visit, dialysis center staff will:

- Change your catheter dressing
- Check your catheter to make sure it is working properly
- Set up training with you and/or your caregiver on how to do peritoneal dialysis at home
- Arrange for your PD supplies to be sent to your home