



Chronic Catheterization Linked To High Risk Of Infection

(NAPSA)—If you or someone you care about is ever diagnosed with prostate problems or other conditions that lead to urinary retention, you should know that you're not alone. In fact, according to doctors at Johns Hopkins, such symptoms are present in about one in four men by age 55 and in half of 75-year-old men.

The Bad News

Urinary catheters are a common treatment for patients dealing with urinary retention, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that catheters lead to more than 500,000 urinary tract infections annually. Additionally, quality of life can be severely affected because of discomfort, frequent care for the catheter and its interference with sexual activity.

It's for these reasons that the CDC recommends that catheters should only be placed in patients when absolutely necessary, and only as long as recommended.

"The benefits of removing a catheter as soon as it is appropriate to do so are significant," said Dr. Sanjay Saint of Catheterout.org. "Patients and providers alike should regularly assess whether a urinary catheter can be removed and consider using alternatives for urinary management. Prompt removal of an indwelling urinary catheter can dramatically reduce the risk of infection and other complications."

All too often, men who experience symptoms of urinary retention and use a catheter do not openly discuss their medical complications, physical discomfort and the effect on the activities of daily living with their physicians.

"Men using urinary catheters to void often suffer in silence, especially those who are catheterized for long periods of time," said Dr. Tomas L. Griebeling, M.D., MPH, of the American Urological Association. "They don't realize that there may actually be other options to help empty the bladder. Urologists have a variety of diagnostic and treatment options that may be appropriate for a male patient in urinary retention."

The Good News

Fortunately, the problem can be treated—and in more ways than many people realize.

These treatments can include:

- Prescription medications to help relax the muscles of the prostate or prevent further prostate growth.



Many men enjoy a more normal life once they ask their doctors about an alternative to catheterization.

- Surgical procedures, either performed under general anesthesia to remove prostate tissue or in-office procedures under a local anesthetic in a urologist's office, including thermal therapies and prostatic urethral lifts.

- Temporary prostatic stents, an easily removable silicone stent placed in the prostatic urethra in an office procedure without the need for anesthesia. The stent creates a wider opening for urine flow without affecting the prostate tissue. As an alternative to a catheter, the stent lets men naturally fill and empty their bladders and gives them freedom, comfort and peace of mind, without restrictions on daily activities. The device is not visible so no one needs to know you have it.

"It is not always feasible for a male in urinary retention to have a catheter removed, but it is surprising how many patients can be treated successfully with other methods, even when they believe they are out of options," said Dr. Richard Roach of Advanced Urology Specialists of Oxford, Fla. "The road to a catheter-free lifestyle often begins with a few simple questions. As a patient's condition becomes clear, we can then choose the best option to treat his urinary retention. For patients who are not good candidates for invasive treatment, a temporary prostatic stent can be an effective alternative to catheterization."

Learn More

Dr. Roach says that patients should be under the care of a urologist in order to stay informed about safer and less invasive alternatives to the catheter. For more on common prostate problems, or to learn more about therapies available to patients, visit www.urologyhealth.org/mit, the official patient education foundation of the American Urological Association.