THE FIRST 24 HOURS AFTER CATHETER REMOVAL

After radical prostatectomy | A practical guide for patients and caregivers

A MILESTONE — AND A NEW ADJUSTMENT

Leaking urine after catheter removal is common. The important first step is to make sure you can also pass urine and empty your bladder. Follow the instructions from your own surgical team.

What you may notice today

- Urine leakage or dribbling, especially when you stand, walk, cough, or change position.
- A sudden urge to urinate or frequent trips to the bathroom, sometimes with little warning.
- Mild stinging with the first few voids or a small amount of pink-tinged urine. These should not worsen.

Your first-day plan

1. **Check that you can urinate.** Note the time the catheter came out and when you first pass urine. Relax; do not push, strain, or force the flow.
2. **Drink steadily, not all at once.** Follow your surgical team's fluid instructions. Avoid drinking excessive amounts to "test" your bladder. Consider limiting caffeine and alcohol if they increase urgency.
3. **Expect to use protection.** Have male incontinence pads or briefs ready. Change promptly when wet; gently wash and dry the skin.
4. **Keep activity gentle.** Follow your post-surgery activity restrictions. Avoid constipation and straining. Restart pelvic floor exercises only when your surgical team says to; instructions vary.

When to get help

CALL YOUR SURGICAL TEAM RIGHT AWAY

- You have not passed urine within 4 hours of removal (or the time your team specified). Call sooner if your lower belly feels full or painful.
- You cannot urinate, have severe or increasing lower-abdominal pain, or feel unable to empty your bladder — even if your pad is wet.
- You have heavy bleeding, large blood clots, fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, or worsening urinary pain or burning.

If you cannot reach the team and cannot urinate or have severe symptoms, seek urgent medical care. Tell the clinician you recently had a radical prostatectomy; catheter reinsertion may need urology guidance.

YOUR FIRST-DAY CHECKLIST

Keep this page nearby on catheter-removal day. Bring it to an appointment or use it when calling the urology team.

Catheter removed at: _____	Date: _____
First urination at: _____	Approx. time since removal: _____
Urology phone: _____	After-hours phone: _____

Before you go home

- ☐ I know when I need to pass urine and whom to call if I cannot.
- ☐ I have pads or briefs, dry underwear, and skin-care supplies ready.
- ☐ I know my team's instructions for fluids, medicines, activity, and pelvic floor exercises.
- ☐ I have my surgeon's regular and after-hours contact numbers.

Simple 24-hour observation log

Record actual attempts to urinate and anything unusual. You do not need to measure every drop unless your team has asked you to.

Time	Passed urine?	Notes (leakage, discomfort, blood, questions)

Caregiver reminder

Your job is not to prevent every leak. Help your loved one stay comfortable, keep supplies within reach, and know when to call for help. Small improvements often happen gradually, not all at once.

Sources for general patient education

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, "Instructions After Removal of the Catheter After Your Prostate Surgery"; UCSF Urology, "Radical Prostatectomy"; Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, "Robotic Assisted Laparoscopic Prostatectomy."

This handout provides general education only and does not replace individualized instructions from your urologist or surgical team. If their instructions differ, follow theirs.