

How a Bladder Catheter Works

(0:12 - 0:40)

Hi, I'm Dr. Shama Iraqov from the Centre for Men's and Women's Urology in Portland, Oregon. And I just wanted to do a quick video on a very common subject that often confuses a lot of people, and that's regarding what a bladder catheter is or a Foley catheter and how it works. In urology, unfortunately, we have to use this not infrequently, and there are times where it's just important that we're able to empty the bladder when your body is unable to do it effectively.

(0:40 - 0:50)

So we put a tube in, and it's called a catheter. The type I have over here is the most common type, and it's also referred to as the Foley catheter. And it's a very simple mechanism, but very effective.

(0:51 - 1:47)

At the very edge of the tube is a little eye that if inserted into the bladder or into any area of fluid, the fluid will go through there and via gravity will just come down and empty through the other side this bigger hole. So for instance, if we would put this in a man who we deem needing help with emptying the bladder, it would be sitting in the bladder something like this, and it would be coming out the tip of the penis sort of like this. And oftentimes, we will have it connected to some sort of an apparatus, commonly we use a bag so that the tip is in the bladder, the urine goes through there, comes through here and empties into the bag, which you would then, when it fills up, empty yourself into a toilet.

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There are times where we would just have the catheter in the bladder for help, and we would just keep a plug, for instance, in the tip that you would then go to the toilet later on and remove so that it would drain out. A woman would be a little different, the same mechanism. We would have it going through the urethra, which is in the vagina, and it would be sitting in the bladder.

(2:12 - 2:42)

How does it stay there? Well, at the end of the tube that goes into the bladder, there's a little balloon so that if I put fluid through a filling port in the catheter, it fills up the balloon. And it's able to stay there through a locking mechanism. If the catheter is in the bladder, that balloon prevents the catheter from getting dislodged.

(2:43 - 3:01)

Same idea for a man. When we want to remove the catheter, we stick the syringe back into that port, pull the fluid out of the balloon, collapse the balloon, the catheter then can come out.

Oftentimes we do this for you.

(3:01 - 3:15)

There are some times that we'll ask you to be able to do it yourself at home, and I just wanted to give you a little summary so it makes a little bit more sense. I hope this was helpful to you. I'm Dr. Shamai Rakho from the Centre for Men's and Women's Urology.