

Patient Education

UWMC Rehab Medicine Clinic/HMC Rehab Medicine Clinic



How to Change a Foley Catheter

Step-by-step instructions for the caregiver

This handout gives step-by-step instructions for changing a Foley catheter, a tube in the bladder to drain urine. A catheter is often used by people with medical conditions that prevent normal urination.

This handout should repeat what you were taught in the hospital. If you have not been shown how to change a catheter, please call the Rehab Medicine Clinic or the doctor.

A Foley catheter must be changed on a regular basis to prevent infections. They are usually changed once a month, but sometimes they need to be changed more often. Talk with the health care provider about how often the catheter should be changed.

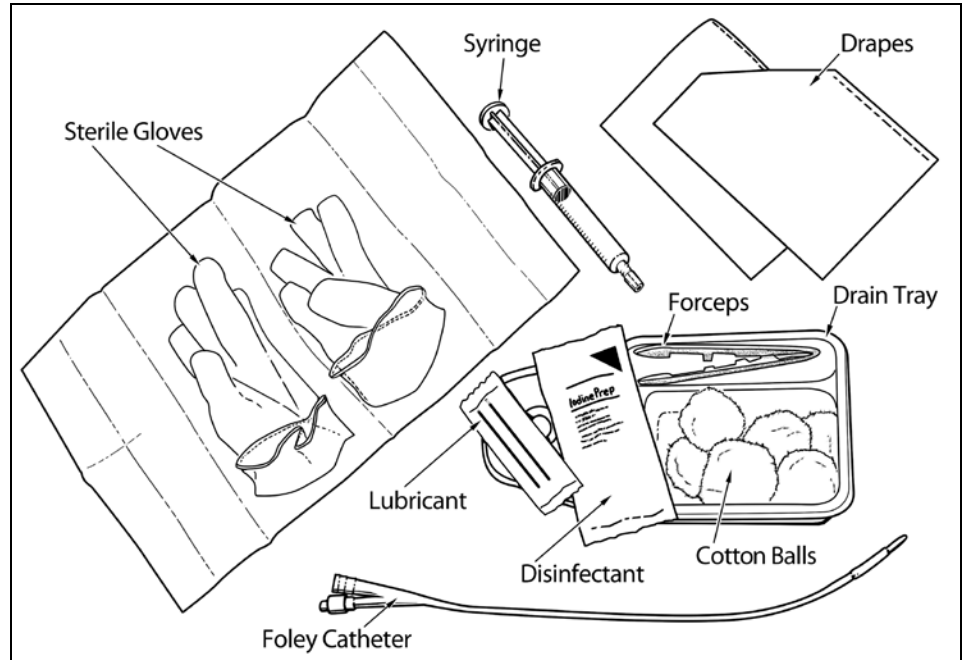
To change a Foley catheter, follow these steps:

- Wash your hands with warm soap and water for at least 30 seconds. You may use a hand sanitizer if your hands are already clean. Do **not** use hand sanitizer if your hands are soiled. Use soap and water instead. Let your hands dry completely before you start to change the catheter.
- Gather equipment (see checklist below and illustration on page 2).

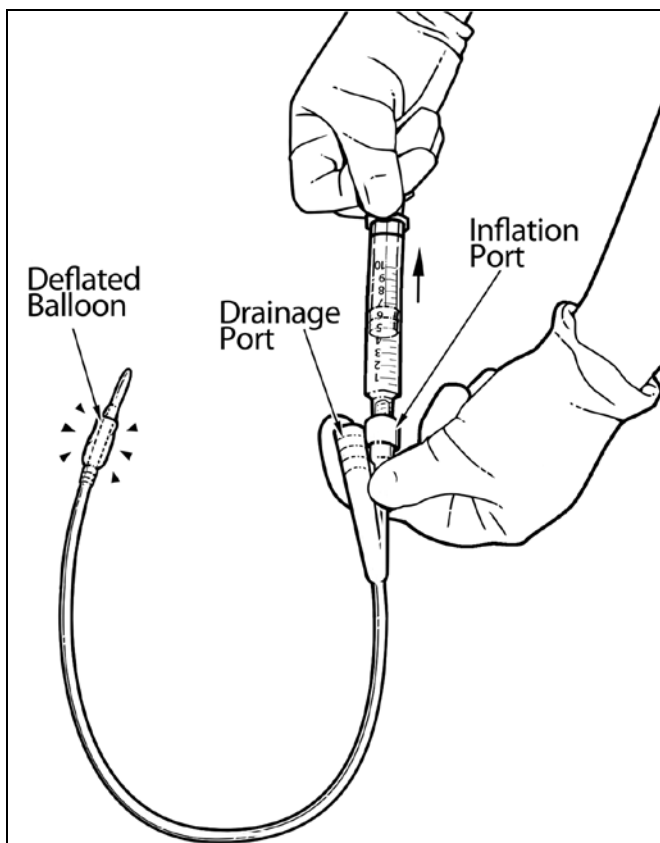
Gather Equipment

Insertion tray: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Sterile gloves<input type="checkbox"/> Syringe with saline<input type="checkbox"/> Drapes<input type="checkbox"/> Drain tray<input type="checkbox"/> Forceps<input type="checkbox"/> Cotton balls<input type="checkbox"/> Lubricant<input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant	Other supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Foley catheter*<input type="checkbox"/> 10 cc syringe to remove old catheter<input type="checkbox"/> New drainage bag<input type="checkbox"/> Clean gloves<input type="checkbox"/> Towel<input type="checkbox"/> Soap<input type="checkbox"/> Washcloth<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight (optional)<input type="checkbox"/> Thigh strap or other device for securing the catheter
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* We recommend a size 14 or 16 French catheter with a 10 cc balloon. Do **not** use a larger catheter or balloon unless the health care provider says to do so.



Insertion tray and Foley catheter



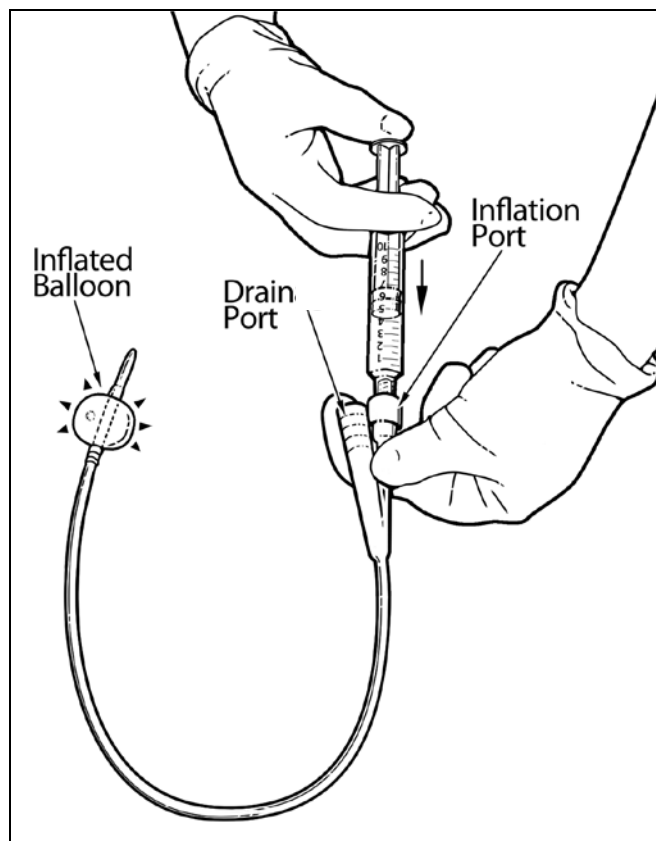
Pull on the plunger to remove fluid from the balloon.

Remove the Old Catheter

1. Position the person on his or her back. Remove their clothes below the waist. Spread their legs slightly. Be sure you have enough light.
2. Put on clean gloves (not the sterile gloves included in the insertion tray).
3. Plug the 10 cc syringe into the inflation port and pull back on the plunger until all fluid from the balloon is sucked into the syringe (usually, this is about 3 to 10 cc).
4. Gently pull on the Foley catheter to remove it. If the catheter does not come out easily, stop and repeat step 3. If you still cannot remove it, call the doctor's office, clinic, or visiting nurse right away.
5. Empty the urine into the toilet, then throw away the drainage bag, catheter, and syringe in the garbage.

Prepare to Insert the Catheter

1. Use a washcloth and soap and water to wash the area where the catheter will enter the body. Dry the area well with a towel. If the person is female, this is a good time to find the *urethra* (the opening into the bladder). See the illustration on page 5.
2. Remove and throw away the gloves you were using.
3. Wash your hands again. Place the sterile insertion tray next to the person.
4. Open the sterile insertion tray.
5. Remove the top drape and place it under the buttocks (for females) or under the penis (for males) to make a sterile area.
6. Open the outside package and carefully drop the Foley catheter wrapped in plastic wrap onto the sterile area.
7. Put on the sterile gloves.
8. Prepare your tray by opening the disinfectant and pouring it over the cotton balls.
9. Open the lubricant and squeeze it into the drain tray.
10. Unwrap the Foley catheter from the plastic and place it in the drain tray.
11. Remove the rubber tip from the sterile syringe.

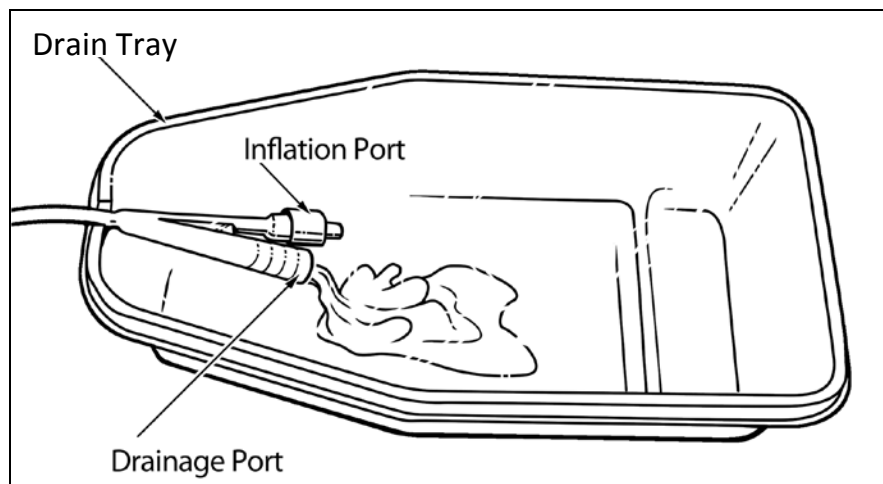


How a Foley catheter works: When the catheter is in the bladder, the inflated balloon holds it in place. **Do NOT inflate the balloon for any reason before inserting the catheter.**

Insert a New Catheter: Female

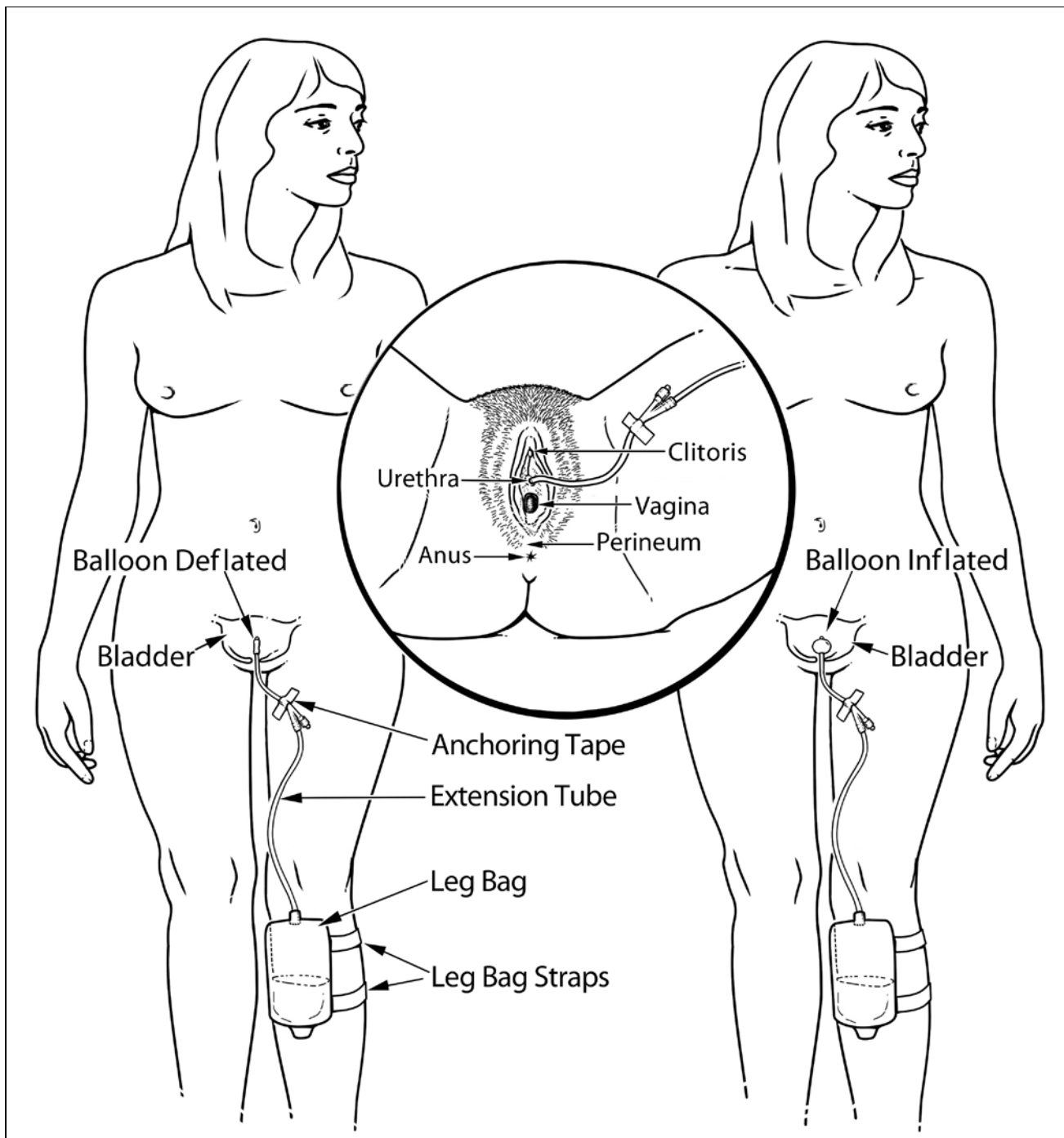
1. With your gloved *non-dominant* hand (the one you do not write with), spread the labia to see the urethra. Note that this hand is no longer sterile.
2. With your gloved *dominant* hand (the one you write with), use forceps and 1 cotton ball at a time to clean the area. Wipe from top to bottom (front to back), 1 side at a time. Use a new cotton ball to wipe in the center over the urethra.
3. With your sterile dominant hand, pick up the Foley catheter, about 2 to 3 inches from the tip. Roll the tip of the catheter in the lubricant.
4. Put the drainage-port end of the catheter in the drain tray. Slowly and steadily, insert the tip of the catheter into the urethra about 1½ to 3 inches, until urine starts coming out through the drainage port. **Gently** insert the catheter 1 to 2 inches more. If urine does not come out right away, wait a few minutes until a few drops come out.

Never force the catheter into the bladder. Ask the person to breathe slowly and deeply to make the catheter easier to insert. If you cannot insert it, call the doctor's office, clinic, or visiting nurse.



Drain tray for changing a Foley catheter

5. Plug the prefilled syringe into the inflation port.
6. Push the plunger (use 5 to 7 cc) to make the balloon inflate.
7. Twist off the syringe to remove it.
8. Pull back **gently** on the catheter to make sure the balloon is inflated. At this time, you can hook the catheter to the drainage bag.
9. Pour the urine into the toilet. Throw away the used equipment in the garbage, including the gloves. Wash your hands again.

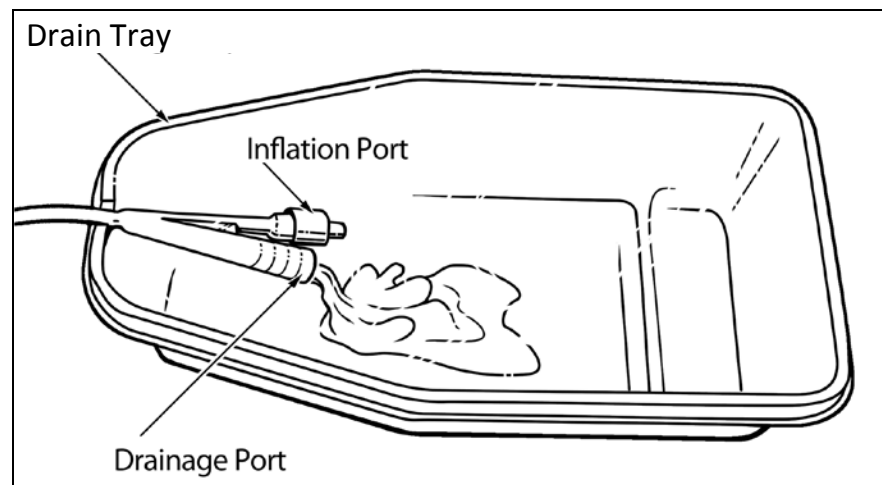


The insertion site and leg bag assembly for a Foley catheter for females

Insert a New Catheter: Males

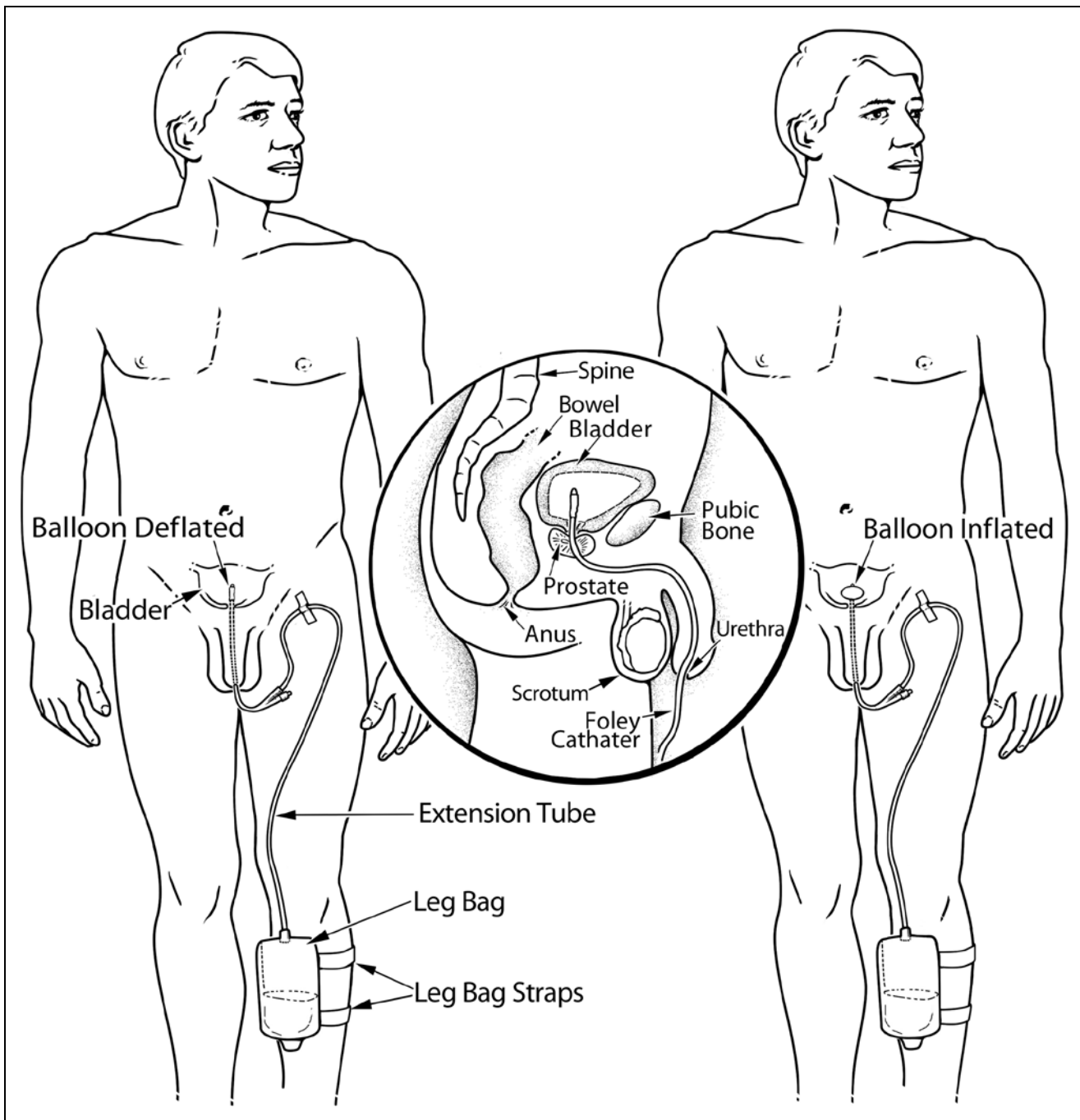
1. With your gloved *non-dominant* hand (the one you do not write with), pick up the penis. If the person has a foreskin, pull it back until you can see the opening into the bladder (urethra). Note that this hand is no longer sterile.
2. With your gloved *dominant* hand (the one you write with), use forceps and 1 cotton ball at a time to clean the area. Start at the urethra and wipe in a circular motion, one time around. Repeat cleaning this way with the rest of the cotton balls. Use the last cotton ball to wipe across the opening of the urethra.
3. With your sterile dominant hand, pick up the Foley catheter 2 to 3 inches from the tip. Roll the tip of the catheter in the lubricant.
4. Put the drainage-port end of the catheter into the insertion tray. Holding the penis upward, slowly and steadily insert the tip of the catheter into the urethra about 8 to 12 inches, until urine starts coming out through the drainage port. **Gently** insert the catheter 1 to 2 inches more. If urine doesn't come out right away, wait a few minutes until a few drops come out.

Never force the catheter into the bladder. Ask the person to breathe slowly and deeply to make the catheter easier to insert. If you cannot insert it, call the doctor's office, clinic, or visiting nurse.



Drain tray for changing a Foley catheter

5. Plug the pre-filled syringe into the inflation port.
6. Push the plunger (5 to 7 cc) to make the balloon inflate.
7. Twist off the syringe to remove it.
8. Pull back **gently** on the catheter to make sure the balloon is inflated. At this time, you can hook the catheter to the drainage bag.
9. Pour the urine into the toilet. Throw away the used equipment in the garbage, including the gloves. Wash your hands again.



Insertion site and leg bag assembly for a Foley catheter for males

