

AHRQ Safety Program for Long-Term Care: HAIs/CAUTI



Infographic: 7 Things You Should Know About Urinary Leg Bags

The infographic flier on page 5 of this PDF can be printed and posted in patient care areas, meeting rooms, or nurse stations, to educate clinicians, residents, and their families on proper use and care of urinary leg bags.

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7 Things You Should Know About Urinary Leg Bags

A multidisciplinary team reviewed the literature and found a general lack of research and evidence about leg bag use and care. This team made general recommendations based on the existing literature and expertise. However, long-term care facilities should determine their best approach (leg bag versus a continuous, large capacity urine collection bag) based on national recommendations, evidence-based practices, their own facility's risk assessment and best practices in shared decision-making with residents and/or families. When implementing a leg bag cleaning and use protocol, do a risk assessment that takes manufacturer's recommendations into account. This content is not intended to supersede manufacturer's instructions.

1. Residents and families sometimes prefer leg bags.

Leg bags allow greater freedom of movement, comfort and dignity. Leg bags can be hidden under clothing and can help residents be more independent in their daily activities.

2. Maintaining a leg bag requires using a clean technique.

Before connecting the leg bag to an indwelling urinary catheter, perform hand hygiene and put on clean gloves. Remove the leg bag caps and disinfect the nozzle by rubbing an alcohol prep pad on the nozzle for 5 seconds and let it air dry. Then disinfect the tip of the catheter and insert the leg bag nozzle into the urinary catheter. Remove gloves, discard them in the trash, and perform hand hygiene again. Disinfect the leg bag caps by rubbing an alcohol prep pad on and in the cap for 5 seconds and let it air dry.

3. The resident's name or initials should be on the leg bag.

Before using the leg bag, and when storing it, make sure the resident's name or initials are on it, to prevent inadvertent use on a second resident.

4. Your facility should have a policy about whether leg bags should be reused and how often they should be changed.

Facilities can do a risk assessment to determine the pros and cons of reusing leg bags. This risk assessment could consider manufacturer's instructions. If leg bags will be reused, the facility should have a policy and procedure that takes manufacturer's instructions into account and includes: hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE), instructions for aseptic technique, cleaning and storage of the bag, and clinical indications for replacing the bag.

5. The outside of the leg bag and leg bag straps should be cleaned during daily bathing.

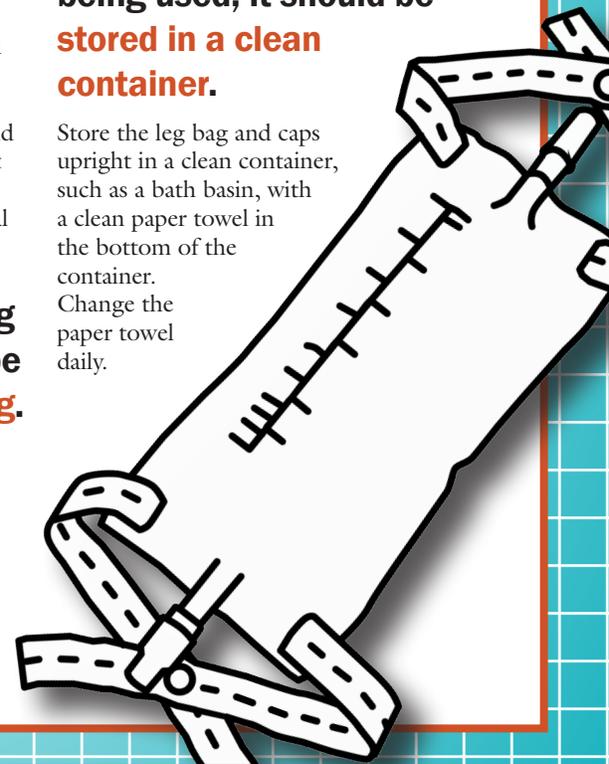
Wipe down the outside of the leg bag and the leg bag straps, which have contact with skin for long periods of time, with soap during routine, daily bathing, or follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning. Rinse and dry the leg bag and straps right away. Do not allow contact with skin while the leg bag and straps are wet.

6. The inside of the leg bag should be cleaned with bleach solution to kill bacteria and reduce odor.

Completely fill and soak the inside of the leg bag, including nozzle and secured caps, with diluted bleach (one part bleach to ten parts water). Diluted vinegar (one part vinegar to three parts water) may in some cases be used but will be ineffective in killing *E. coli* or *S. aureus*. Follow manufacturer's instructions. Put on PPE before filling and emptying the bag to protect against splashing. Rinse the bag and caps with water after soaking.

7. When the leg bag is not being used, it should be stored in a clean container.

Store the leg bag and caps upright in a clean container, such as a bath basin, with a clean paper towel in the bottom of the container. Change the paper towel daily.



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