

Purple Urine Bag Syndrome (PUBS): What You Need to Know

What is Purple Urine Bag Syndrome?

Purple Urine Bag Syndrome (PUBS) is a rare condition where urine in a catheter bag turns **purple**. It can be surprising or even alarming, but it is usually **not dangerous** and can be treated easily.

Why Does It Happen?

PUBS happens when certain bacteria in the urinary tract break down substances in urine. This leads to the production of pigments that turn the urine **purple** when it collects in the bag.

Common reasons include:

- A **urinary tract infection (UTI)** caused by specific bacteria
- Having a **long-term urinary catheter**
- **Constipation** (slows down how waste moves through the body)
- **Alkaline urine** (urine with a high pH)



Who Is at Risk?

PUBS mostly happens in:

- Older adults
- People with **long-term catheters**
- People with **kidney problems**
- People who are **bedridden** or in long-term care



Is It Harmful?

The purple color itself is **not harmful**, but it usually means there's a **UTI**, which does need medical attention.

*The information provided on the site is for educational purposes only, and does not substitute for professional medical advice. Consult a medical professional or healthcare provider if you are seeking medical advice, diagnoses, or treatment.



What Should You Do?

If you or a loved one notices purple urine in the catheter bag:

1. **Do not panic.**
2. **Contact a healthcare provider** – a urine test can confirm if there's an infection.
3. **Watch for signs of infection**, such as:
 - Fever or chills
 - Burning or pain when urinating (if able)
 - Confusion or change in mental status
 - Cloudy or foul-smelling urine



How Is It Treated?

Treatment usually includes:

- **Antibiotics** for the infection
- Managing constipation
- Replacing the **catheter and bag**
- Drinking more **fluids** (if allowed by your provider)



How Can You Prevent It?

- Keep the catheter area **clean**
- Make sure the **catheter flows freely** (no kinks or blockages)
- Treat constipation promptly
- Follow up regularly with your healthcare provider

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