

Helping improve clients' quality of life

Sometimes introducing a new product or piece of equipment can enhance clients' quality of life.

By Marian Weststrate, RN, BN, district nurse with Capital and Coast DHB, based on the Kapiti Coast, Wellington, New Zealand.

As nurses working with patients in the community and hospitals, we all come across situations where we see patients struggling to use some products or equipment. Nurses are known as problem solvers and, as such, we should not accept such situations, if there are affordable solutions which would make life easier for these patients.

In my work as a district nurse I have encountered patients trying to secure a urinary or wound drainage bag onto their leg in a way that ensures the bag doesn't drag uncomfortably and isn't visible. Elastic leg bag straps can cause pain or swelling to the legs or irritate the skin and this can require a nurse's attention. I have seen swollen legs, blisters due to shear and pressure, and irritation, all caused by elastic straps. I have come across moist or dirty straps, possibly from urine or shower water. And I've seen straps not tight enough to prevent the urinary bag dropping down under the client's clothing or dragging on the floor. To prevent this happening, I have seen safety-pins used to fasten the elastic leg-bag straps or many knots in the elastic straps to tighten them because the Velcro is not holding them together tightly enough. I'm sure other nurses have come across similar situations.



For many years there have been more comfortable alternatives on the market. Light-weight, stretchy leg-bag holders have an inner pocket designed to hold the leg bag and an opening at the bottom for the drainage tap. It is like a sleeve which can be worn around the thigh or the calf

and is available in various sizes. It is made from synthetic or natural stretchy material, which allows the bag to fill up. It evenly spreads the pressure and secures the drainage bag to the leg and prevents it from dragging down. It minimises direct contact between the leg bag and the patient's skin. The leg-bag holders are machine and hand-washable and, therefore, reusable. Whenever we come across patients with newly inserted catheters, we offer them the sleeved leg-bag holders.

When we introduced the leg-bag holders to our community health service, the majority of patients were in favour of them. However, there was a small number of patients who were not able to use them. One man with decreased mobility had difficulty bending over to open the drainage connection. With the elastic straps, he just pulled the bag up his leg. A wheelchair-bound lady preferred to have her urinary drainage bag attached to her wheelchair.

I have been asked whether people with dementia could use these leg-bag holders. In my work, I have not come across many patients with cognitive decline who have catheters – most who are incontinent are using other products, such as pads. Those with catheters were receiving assistance from carers, who would be able to use the leg-bag holders.

I hope this article raises awareness of products that can help improve the quality of life for those of our clients who have catheters.

In the words of a grateful client . . .

"Hi Marian, I want thank you for introducing "leg-bag pocket socks" for Mum's catheter drainage bag to us. The leg-bag socks have made a difference. Prior to the leg-bag pocket sock, the bags were held in place with elastic straps. They tended to be uncomfortable and often failed to hold the catheter drainage bag up. To overcome this failure meant tightening the straps and as a consequence caused Mum's leg to swell. To counter this, we alternated the leg which had the bag on. The straps also left marks on the skin. Now with the leg pocket socks, Mum does not have any of these issues. She finds the socks are comfortable, don't fall down and don't leave marks. Thanks again for that little something which makes life more pleasant."



Leg Bag Holster

Stock Code	Colour	Size	Stretch Potential	Box QTY
9612		Small	26-36 cm*	4
9613		Medium	36-48 cm*	4
9614		Large	48-62 cm*	4

© 2016 Hollister Incorporated. All rights reserved. Hollister and logo are trademarks of Hollister Incorporated. Reproduced with permission from Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand. First published in November, 2015. Photos used are for illustrative purposes only. This article does not represent an explicit endorsement by the author. Abridged from original for space purposes. * Estimate only.

Hollister Leg Bag Holsters
An alternative to Leg Bag Straps



1800 219 179
www.hollister.com