How can the bladder be injured?

The bladder is the organ that holds urine. It sits deep inside the abdomen. The bladder is rarely injured because it is so well protected but injuries can be caused by either a blunt trauma (a hard blow to the body) or penetrating trauma (like a stab or gunshot wound). They can also be caused by pelvic fractures.

Injury to the bladder can cause urine to leak into the abdomen which can lead to infection. The extent of the injury to the bladder all depends on how full the bladder is at the time of injury. The more full the bladder, the greater the risk for a more serious injury.

Symptoms of a bladder injury

- Difficulty urinating
- Pain while urinating
- Blood in the urine
- Lower abdominal pain

Tests/procedures you may need

- Physical exam
- Urinalysis
- X-rays
- Retrograde urethrogram
- Retrograde cystogram
- CT scan
- Ultrasound

Treatment

Treatment varies depending on where the injury exists. If the injury is within the bladder, surgery is likely. When the bladder is healing, a Foley catheter will remain in place to drain urine constantly to allow the bladder from filling up/stretching. The catheter will remain until doctors determine that the surgery was successful, usually for at least 2 weeks. If the injury is to the urethra, a doctor may place a special catheter through the urethra or place a catheter directly into the abdominal wall (called a supra-pubic catheter). These catheters usually remain in place for 3-6 months until the urethra is repaired surgically or has healed on its own.
If you are discharged from the hospital prior to the foley catheter being removed a nurse will teach you how to care for your catheter at home. The nurse will also teach you how to change to a smaller bag during the day (a leg bag) at home.

**What should I do if I have problems when I leave the hospital?**

Patients can contact the Urology Clinic at *(608) 263-4757*
Patients can contact the Trauma Clinic at *(608) 263-7502*

After hours, nights, weekends, and holidays, this will give you the paging operator. Ask for the resident on call for your clinic. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, please call **1-800-323-8942** and ask for your clinic.