

### Using a urinal: Overview

If the person you're caring for is not able to leave their bed to go to the bathroom, they may need to use a urinal. A urinal is a container used to collect urine. It is shaped to fit either a man or a woman. But some women might find it easier to use a bedpan.

If you are helping someone with a urinal, try to be relaxed. Helping with a urinal can be embarrassing for both of you. This may be especially true if you are caring for someone of the opposite sex. If you are calm and don't seem embarrassed, the person may feel more comfortable.

### How can you help someone use a urinal?

Start by gathering supplies. You will need a urinal, gloves, and toilet paper or wet wipes. Make sure you have a place to set the urinal aside while you help with wiping or getting dressed.

Wash and dry your hands well, and put on gloves. Have the person you're caring for take down their pants and underwear if they are female, or unzip their pants if they are male. Offer help if needed.

### Helping someone use a urinal

- Ask them to put the urinal between their legs. If this is not possible, help them spread their legs.
- If possible, cover the person with a sheet or blanket for privacy. If you can leave them alone safely, leave the room to give more privacy.
- If the person needs help, position the urinal and hold it gently while they urinate. If a male cannot do it himself, put the penis in the opening at the top of the urinal.
- When the person is done urinating, carefully remove the urinal.

### After the person uses the urinal

- Help the person wipe if needed. For women, be sure to wipe the area from front to back.
- If you used a wet wipe or a damp cloth, dry the area between the person's legs after wiping.
- Empty the urinal into the toilet.
- Rinse and wash the urinal using a disinfectant diluted with water. Dry the urinal or let it air-dry.
- Take off your gloves and throw them away.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

**Current as of:** April 1, 2019

**Author:** [Healthwise Staff](https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd) <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

**Medical Review:** Adam Husney, MD — Family Medicine & Gayle E. Stauffer, RN — Registered Nurse & Kathleen Romito, MD — Family Medicine