

## ***Children with Vesicostomies***

A vesicostomy is a type of stoma seen in children and sometimes but rarely in adults. It is an opening in the abdomen that allows urine to drain continuously from the bladder. The stoma is made by a surgeon who makes a small cut through the skin into the bladder. A small part of the bladder wall is turned inside out and sewn to the abdomen. The position of this stoma is midway between the umbilicus and the pubic bone.

This is most commonly done in young children, babies or toddlers who have an obstruction in the urinary tract or vesicoureteric reflux or Spina-bifida. Generally vesicostomies are not difficult to manage and as they are often in young children the urine drains into a nappy.

Some older children prefer to use a urostomy appliance/bag. It is often quite difficult to find a bag that will stay on reliably due to the positioning of the stoma, which is not sited and is often in a skin fold. Leaks for school age children are very embarrassing and annoying. One way of helping bags stay on longer is regular emptying as the bags fill quickly and get heavy causing leakages. There is a way that parents, teachers and integration aides can, without nagging, help kids prevent leakages and give them some independence.

There are a couple of types of vibrating wrist watches available in hot pink or navy that can be set to vibrate whenever required. As soon as the child feels the vibration he or she knows to go and empty the bag. These watches can be set to go off at regular intervals or at lunch or recess times. Young kids are easily distracted and don't like to have attention which makes them stand out as different. These watches look like regular watches. We have had success with several school age kids with vesicostomies who have started using these watches and the incidence of leaking bags during the school day and at home has been significant. So just maybe worth a try for some readers. For details about these types of watches it is best to contact your local continence nurse who should have details of supply and costs in your area.



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