

Knitted Catheter Bag Cover I

By Jan Striemer

To some, the catheter bag is one of the most humiliating and obvious signs of illness. By design, the clear plastic bag easily indicates to caregivers the amount of urine in the bag. But it also telegraphs the contents to anyone visiting the patient. In the case of hospice, it's just one more indignity at the end of life.

Hopewell House in Portland, Oregon, is Portland's only residential care facility dedicated to care for those at the end of life: hopewellhousepdx.org. Caregivers asked our team of volunteer knitters if we could create a knitted cover for a catheter bag that attaches to the bed. We came up with a simple design that can be easily checked or changed. Our nurses were thrilled!



The first photo shows the catheter bag with a prototype cover. The second photo is the simplified pattern for our volunteers. It is a simple garter-stitched rectangle, 10" X 18" long with two 3-1/2" button tabs on each side on one end of the rectangle. When folded in half, the sides can be seamed or crocheted together. The center top needs to be kept free to accommodate the 3" plastic holder and tube. The tabs fold over the top and button in place.

We suggest subtle colors and design elements. Cotton would work, too, but it's not quite as stretchy. The catheter bag we're using is actually 11" on the bottom and 10" at the top. By knitting the rectangle at 10" wide, it has just enough "give" to fit both the top and the bottom measurements.

Size:

Finished size 10"w x 9"h. Created from a 10" x 18" rectangle, folded in half.

Supplies:

Acrylic worsted weight yarn – approx. 200 yards – must be machine washable and dryable

US size 7 circular needles, 16" - 24" in length

Tapestry needle

Two medium sized buttons (if yarn is a solid color, a contrasting button color is fun).

Stitch markers

Gauge:

Garner stitch on US 7 needle: 17 sts & 20 garter st ridges in 4" (Using a #7 needle will give the fabric a little sturdier feel).

Gauge after washing should measure 10" across

Abbreviations

BO bind off

K knit

K2TOG knit two together

(RS) right side

SSK slip, slip, knit (slip 2 sts knit-wise, then knit together)

st stitch

sts stitches

(WS) wrong side

YO yarn over

Directions

CO 44 sts with a long tail cast on

K across rows on both sides to create garter stitch pattern until it measures 18". It's helpful to put a marker on the right side (tail will be on the right). Before you knit too far, make certain your rows are measuring as close to 10" wide as possible so the catheter bag will fit. End on a wrong side, don't cut the yarn, and begin the tabs:

Row 1 (RS) BO1, K14, BO 12 sts, K to 3 sts before 3, SSK, K1. You should have 15 sts on each side.

Place the first 15 sts on scrap yarn or a stitch holder. Continue knitting back and forth on the left tab as follows:

Row 2 (WS) K

*Row 3 (RS) BO1, K to end, BO last st, (13 sts left)

Row 4 (WS) K

Row 5 (RS) BO1, K to end, BO last st, (11 sts left)

Row 6 (WS) K

Row 7 (RW) BO1, K to end, BO last st, (9 sts left)

Ending with (WS), continue in garter stitch until tab measures 3" from the center bound off stitches row

(RS) K4, YO, K2TOG, K3 (this will create button hole)

(WS) K

Continue in garter stitch for 1 more garter stitch ridge (2 rows total), ending with a (WS).

(RS) BO1, K3, SSK, K1 (7 sts left)

(WS) K

(RS) BO, cut yarn

Replace held stitches onto your needle. Starting from the center bound-off stitches, *on the wrong side*, add yarn and knit across.

(RS) follow instructions from * (Row 3) to the end of the tab.

Seam the sides, bury ends, sew on buttons.