

Catheter Care

● SKILL SNAPSHOT

Purpose

- Maintains a clean urinary meatus, unobstructed closed drainage, and secure catheter while reducing CAUTI and tissue injury.

When to use

- Routine care and after bowel movements, incontinence, visible soil, leakage, or catheter/device assessment.

Supplies needed

- Soap/water or facility-approved cleanser; washcloths/wipes; gloves; towel/pad; securement device; drainage container.

● PREP + PATIENT SETUP

- Verify indication and assess whether catheter is still necessary.
- Assess urine, tubing, bag position, securement, meatus, pain, leakage, and skin.
- Explain care and provide privacy.

● VAULT TIP

- CAUTI prevention is mostly system care: closed, flowing downhill, secured, and removed promptly.

● STEP-BY-STEP

1. Hand hygiene; identify patient; apply gloves and position safely with a waterproof pad.
2. Inspect catheter from meatus to bag for obstruction, dependent loops, disconnection, leakage, and traction.
3. Stabilize catheter near meatus with nondominant hand to prevent pulling.
4. Clean urinary meatus and surrounding perineum with soap/water or approved cleanser.
5. For vulvar anatomy, clean front to back using a fresh area each stroke.
6. For penile anatomy, retract foreskin if needed, clean meatus outward, then return foreskin immediately.
7. Clean catheter tubing from meatus outward several inches using a fresh cloth area; never scrub toward the urethra.
8. Rinse if required and pat skin dry. Do not routinely use antiseptic at meatus unless specifically indicated.
9. Reapply/adjust securement without tension. Keep tubing unkinked with continuous downhill flow.
10. Keep drainage bag below bladder, off floor, and attached to bed frame—not a movable side rail.
11. Empty bag using separate clean container without touching spigot to container; close/disinfect spigot per policy.
12. Remove gloves, hand hygiene, reassess comfort, urine flow, and ongoing catheter need.

● SAFETY REMINDERS

- Maintain a closed system; do not disconnect for routine care.
- Bag stays below bladder and off floor.
- Return foreskin after care.
- Remove catheter as soon as no longer indicated.

● COMMON MISTAKES

- Cleaning toward meatus.
- Bag on floor/side rail.
- Tubing loops or traction.
- Breaking closed system.

● DOCUMENTATION

- Indication/necessity review.
- Meatus/skin and securement.
- Urine amount/appearance/odor.
- Tubing/bag function and care.
- Pain, leakage, teaching, notifications.