



Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Topic: Catheter Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI's)

Introduction: A catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) occurs when germs enter the urinary tract through the urinary catheter and cause infection. An indwelling urinary catheter increases the risk of CAUTI⁴.

What is the risk? Germs can live on devices. When a device is put into a patient's body, like a urinary catheter, any germs on the catheter can spread into the patient's body². These germs can cause infections¹. It is important to take infection prevention control actions like cleaning your hands and understanding the guidelines for the proper use of urinary catheters³, including knowing when to remove catheters. **Know the symptoms of a CAUTI.** A CAUTI has similar symptoms to a typical UTI. These include:

- New onset or worsening of fever.
- Confusion
- Malaise or lethargy with no other identified cause
- Flank pain
- Acute blood in the urine
- Pelvic discomfort
- And in those whose catheters have been removed, painful or uncomfortable urination, urgent or frequent urination, or lower abdominal pain or tenderness³.

Infection Control Actions to Reduce the Risk:

In addition to following facility policy:

- Clean your hands immediately before and after any care of the catheter device or site.
- Use Standard Precautions, including the use of gloves and gown as appropriate, during any touching of the catheter or collecting system.
- A mask with eye protection may be needed if urine might splatter, for example during emptying of the collection bag or closing the drainage spigot.
- Inform the charge nurse or the medical provider when you identify that a patient or resident with a catheter is showing signs of infection (signs of infection shown above).
- Do not clean the tissues surrounding the urethra area with antiseptics to prevent CAUTI while the catheter is in place.
 - Routine cleaning during daily bathing or showering is appropriate.

- Always keep the drainage bag below the bladder and do not rest the drainage bag on the floor.
- Make sure there is nothing blocking or obstructing urine flow.
- Notify the charge nurse or medical provider when you identify that a patient or resident's catheter is obstructed.
- Keep the catheter and collecting tube free from kinking.
- Empty the collecting bag regularly using a separate, clean container for each patient.
- Avoid splashing and prevent contact of the drainage spigot with the non-sterile container⁴.

Summary: A catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) can be prevented by the infection control actions you take to stop the spread of germs on devices in the healthcare setting⁷.

References:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines>
2. [Germs can live on devices \(cdc.gov\)](#)
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, November 5). *Background*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/cauti/background.html>
4. *Guideline for prevention of catheter-associated urinary tract ...* (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/guidelines/cauti-guidelines-H.pdf>
5. *North Dakota Department of Health*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 16, 2022, from http://ndhealth.gov/disease/hai/Presentation/Catherter_Association.pdf
6. Appendix J. Long-Term Care CAUTI Surveillance Worksheet. Content last reviewed March 2017. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <https://www.ahrq.gov/hai/quality/tools/cauti-ltc/modules/resources/tools/cauti-surveillance/assessment.html>
7. Thomas M. Hooton and others, Diagnosis, Prevention, and Treatment of Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection in Adults: 2009 International Clinical Practice Guidelines from the Infectious Diseases Society of America, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 50, Issue 5, 1 March 2010, Pages 625–663, <https://doi.org/10.1086/650482>