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NHS

IPC Bulletin for Care Homes

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Produced by an NHS Community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team based in North Yorkshire for distribution to subscribers.

Is a catheter still required?

Review every resident. Reduce harm. Improve care.

Continuing need?
consider alternatives,
Prevent harm!

Why this matters!

Catheter associated urinary tract infections are among the most common healthcare associated infections in both hospital and community settings.
Long-term catheterisation can increase the risk of:

- Catheter associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) and bloodstream infections
- Avoidable hospital admissions
- Increased antimicrobial prescribing

Many long-term catheters remain in place longer than clinically necessary
GIRFT (Getting it right first time).

ASK...

Does this resident still need a catheter?

- Is the catheter still clinically indicated?
- Have alternatives been considered?
- Has a trial without catheter (TWOC) been considered?
- Has the resident's condition changed since insertion?

Registered staff...

Refer to the Houdini protocol.

When a catheter may be appropriate!

- Urinary retention/obstruction.
- End of life comfort care.
- Accurate urine output monitoring in critical illness.
- To protect an open/ peritoneal wound.
- Specialist urological recommendation.

Check ongoing need regularly!

UTI/catheter Resources.

Catheter maintenance principles

- Maintain a closed sterile drainage system
- Keep the catheter secure using a stabilisation device
- Position the drainage bag below the bladder and off the floor
- Ensure urine flows freely and tubing is not kinked
- Empty the drainage bag regularly using a clean technique
- Perform hand hygiene before and after catheter care
- Document reviews and ongoing indication
- Do not use dipsticks to diagnose a urinary tract infection in a catheterised resident

What's new

- **IPC training event** for Care Homes and Domiciliary Care: 16th November, 2026 - **Book now to reserve your place**.
  www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/events/

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download.
www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk
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