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Urinary catheter care Initial assessment

Nursing Foundation | Initial assessment

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Fictional educational example. Individualize using verified patient findings, authorized treatment and current local protocols. No real patient record or observed outcome is claimed.

Clinical assessment

Subjective: Concerned about the drainage bag and mild discomfort when moving.

Objective findings and required checks: Closed drainage system present; tubing needs secure support and unobstructed flow.

Physical examination and investigations: Review catheter indication, urine output, insertion documentation and symptoms; culture only when clinically indicated.

Supply actual values, units, timing and trends during supervised application. Do not invent missing clinical data.

Clinical focus and pathophysiology

Urinary catheter care: A catheter bypasses normal barriers and can introduce infection or cause trauma.

Medical / surgical management

Maintain a closed, dependent drainage system, secure the catheter and request daily review of necessity.

Illustrative drug and treatment study

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Medicine / treatment	Purpose	Nursing checks
No routine prophylactic antibiotic	Antibiotics are not automatically indicated for a catheter	Treat only according to clinical assessment
prescribed analgesic	Manage assessed discomfort	Evaluate cause rather than masking retention or obstruction.

Treatment examples are not a prescription. Verify the authorized product, dose, route, timing, contraindications and current local product information.

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Nursing care plan

Nursing diagnoses use original clinical problem wording. They are not the licensed NANDA-I classification. Verify any formal label or code against your institution's licensed current edition; select actual or risk diagnoses only when supported by assessment.

Context task: Establish the immediate clinical priorities and verify the baseline before assuming a diagnosis.

Set individualized measurable targets and an exact review time. Select actual or risk statements only when supported by assessment.

Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about exposure, wound symptoms and recent invasive devices. Assess: Inspect relevant sites and monitor systemic findings and investigation trends.	Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection. Possible factors: disrupted barriers, exposure or reduced host defence. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Aseptic care is maintained and any new signs of infection are escalated promptly. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates relevant hygiene and explains the infection-prevention plan.	1. Use hand hygiene and risk-based standard or transmission precautions. Rationale: Interrupting transmission protects the patient, staff and other patients. 2. Review invasive device need with the team and maintain indicated aseptic care. Rationale: Unnecessary devices and barrier breaks increase infection exposure. 3. Monitor for systemic deterioration and administer prescribed antimicrobials on schedule. Rationale: Early escalation and timely indicated treatment reduce avoidable harm. 4. Maintain a closed, dependent drainage system, secure the catheter and request daily review of necessity. Rationale: A catheter bypasses normal barriers and can introduce infection or cause trauma. The condition-specific plan addresses the underlying problem while response is monitored.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask about dysuria, urgency, retention and usual urinary pattern. Assess: Assess output, discomfort, bladder findings and relevant urine tests.	Urinary elimination affected by illness or obstruction. Possible factors: altered bladder function, irritation or drainage difficulty. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Urine drainage and comfort improve within the agreed review interval. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Explains hygiene, catheter instructions if applicable and follow-up needs.	1. Measure urine trends and assess pain, retention or blocked drainage promptly. Rationale: Obstruction and low output may require urgent intervention. 2. Support privacy and indicated hygiene while avoiding unnecessary catheterization. Rationale: Comfort and infection prevention support recovery. 3. Collect ordered samples correctly and implement prescribed treatment. Rationale: Reliable assessment guides targeted management.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.
Ask: Ask about pain site, onset, severity, quality and the patient's acceptable pain level. Assess: Observe guarding, expression and effect on movement; use an appropriate pain scale.	Pain interfering with rest or activity. Possible factors: tissue irritation, injury or the underlying condition. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Pain decreases toward the patient-agreed target after reassessment. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Uses agreed comfort strategies and explains when new or worsening pain needs review.	1. Assess pain and associated red flags before and after treatment. Rationale: Changing pain may signal a complication and helps evaluate relief. 2. Provide comfortable positioning, reassurance and appropriate non-drug measures. Rationale: Comfort measures can reduce distress and complement prescribed treatment. 3. Give prescribed analgesia and monitor sedation, breathing and other adverse effects. Rationale: Relief should improve function without creating medication-related harm.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Assessment: subjective / objective	Nursing diagnosis: original problem wording	Short- and longer-term goals	Nursing interventions with rationale	Evaluation
Ask: Ask what the learner already knows and wants to understand. Assess: Use teach-back or demonstration to identify specific gaps.	Learning needs about the condition and care plan. Possible factors: new information, complex treatment or limited prior teaching. Validate against the patient's assessment.	Short-term: After the first indicated intervention, at the documented review time: Explains the most important immediate action in their own words. Longer-term: Before the clinically approved transition or agreed follow-up: Demonstrates the agreed care skills and names follow-up and warning signs.	1. Assess language, literacy, hearing, vision and preferred learning method. Rationale: Accessible teaching improves understanding. 2. Teach a few condition-specific points using plain language and demonstration. Rationale: Focused information is easier to retain and apply. 3. Use teach-back, correct misunderstandings and provide an accessible written plan. Rationale: Checking understanding supports safer self-management. 4. Teach hand hygiene, bag positioning and avoiding traction or disconnection; explain the removal plan. Rationale: Condition-specific teaching connects the treatment plan to safe continuing care.	Record the baseline and reassessed finding, the time and whether this goal is met, partly met or not met. If not met, reassess causes and revise or escalate. Do not record an unobserved improvement.

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Health education and continuing care

Teach hand hygiene, bag positioning and avoiding traction or disconnection; explain the removal plan.

Transition only after clinical readiness is confirmed. Reconcile medicines, check access and caregiver support, and document who will review the patient and when.

Urgent warning signs

Report fever with deterioration, suprapubic pain, blocked drainage, hematuria or accidental removal.

Evaluation and conclusion

For each goal, document met, partly met or not met using observed evidence and the review time. Reassess and revise if progress is inadequate. Individual assessment, prioritized care and coordinated review guide this topic.

Quick Revision

- A catheter bypasses normal barriers and can introduce infection or cause trauma.

- Priority concerns: Vulnerability to infection or worsening infection; Urinary elimination affected by illness or obstruction; Pain interfering with rest or activity; Learning needs about the condition and care plan.

- Report fever with deterioration, suprapubic pain, blocked drainage, hematuria or accidental removal.

- Teach hand hygiene, bag positioning and avoiding traction or disconnection; explain the removal plan.

Exam / viva: Which finding changes the order of priorities, and what must be escalated immediately?

References

Nursing Fundamentals, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2024
https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/nursingfundamentals/

Nursing Pharmacology, 2e - Ernstmeyer & Christman (editors), Open RN / WisTech Open, 2023
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https://www.indiannursingcouncil.org/gazette-notification

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