



Summary of Most Common Uses of Urinary Catheters

Clinical Indication	Indwelling	ISC	External	Noncatheter Options
Patient cannot urinate due to urinary infection				
Acute retention without bladder outlet obstruction	Yes	Yes, if bladder can be emptied between 4 to 6 hours	No	Bladder scanner to avoid catheter when no or little urine is found
Acute retention with bladder outlet obstruction	Indwelling/ISC appropriateness vary by type so consider urology consultation for prostatitis or urethral trauma			
Chronic retention without bladder outlet obstruction	Uncertain	Yes		
Chronic urinary retention with bladder outlet obstruction	Yes			
Patient cannot stop or control urination due to incontinence				
Incontinence (no skin issue), nurses can turn/provide skin care	No	No	No	Barrier creams, prompted toileting, garments can manage incontinence-related skin issues
Incontinence (no skin issue), nurses can turn/provide skin care but patient requests catheter			Yes	
Incontinence (no skin issues), difficulty turning (e.g., weight >300 lb.)	Yes			
Turning causes hemodynamic or respiratory instability				
Strict temporary immobility after vascular procedure	Yes. All catheters appropriate if cannot manage urine otherwise.			
Incontinence with mild/early incontinence-associated dermatitis	No	No	Uncertain	

Criteria for Appropriate Urinary Catheter Use in Hospitalized Medical Patients
Adapted with permission from the Ann Arbor Criteria, Annals of Internal Medicine, May 2015



Patient cannot stop or control urination due to incontinence, continued				
Incontinence with moderate/severe incontinence-associated dermatitis	No	No	Yes	Barrier creams, prompted toileting, garments can manage incontinence-related skin issues
Incontinence with closed pressure ulcer: stage I, deep tissue injury			Uncertain	Yes, if use of noncatheter options would not worsen ulcer
Clinician requests catheter to measure urine volume				
Hourly urine volume is required to provide treatment	Yes	No	No	No
Daily (not hourly) urine volume required to guide treatment.	Yes, if can't be collected/ accessed without catheter	Uncertain	Yes if can't be access without catheter	Exam/daily weight, urinal, bedpan etc.
Post-void residual urine volume	No	Yes if no bladder scanner	No	Bladder scanner
Urine specimen collection is needed to perform a diagnostic test				
Sterile sample for urine culture for diagnostic test	No	Yes	Uncertain	No
Nonsterile random urine sample			Yes	
24-hour urine sample	Yes	Uncertain		
Urine catheter is requested to provide comfort and/or convenience				
Improve comfort (address patient/family goals) in actively dying patient	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes for all options
Family or patient request in nondying patient with no incontinence or difficulties using commode, urinal, or bedpan	No	No	No	
Chronic ISC patient requests a "break" from ISC while admitted	Uncertain	Yes		Bladder scanner to reduce frequency of ISC by avoiding if no or little urine in bladder

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