MRAD 223 – Patient Care 1

Urinary Catheters

Purpose: *Discuss the insertion of, and precautions to follow, for urinary catheters.*

Introduction

Since the urinary bladder is easily infected, any object or solution that is inserted into it must be free of bacteria and their spores.

Catheterization is not performed without a specific order from a physician.

Some catheters are used for *input/output measurement*. Please don't empty a catheter collection bag before checking to see if urine measurements are required.

Remember: Patients are often embarrassed about having a urinary catheter. *Please respect their privacy and provide reassurance.*

Types and Purposes of Urinary Catheters

Straight catheter – used to obtain a specimen or to empty a bladder. For short-term use only and is removed after the purpose is served.

Retention or indwelling catheter – the most common type is a Foley catheter. Used for long-term continuous drainage of urine. The retention/indwelling catheter has a small balloon at the tip of the catheter. Retention catheters are double lumen. One lumen is for the drainage of urine and the second lumen is for inflating the balloon. Once the catheter is inserted, it is inflated with sterile water. The inflated balloon is used to help hold the catheter in place.

Urinary catheters are attached to collection bags, which have different ways of emptying the urine.

Precautions with Urinary Catheters

- The urine collection bags MUST be kept **below the level of the patient's bladder** to prevent urine in the tube or bag from being siphoned back into the bladder.
- Urine returning back into the bladder causes patient discomfort and allows bacteria to access the bladder.
- This is the *most common cause of urinary tract infections* with catheterized patients.
- Drainage bags that are lifted above the patient during a transfer should be clamped to prevent urine from re-entering the bladder. Release clamp after transferring.
- The drainage tubing must not be kinked or bent in any way
- Careful when handling the catheter's drainage bag and tubing – DO NOT **pull or apply tension** to this equipment. This is particularly important when performing a transfer using a slider board.