

Table 2.
A. Examples of Appropriate Indications for Indwelling Urethral Catheter Use ¹⁻⁴
Patient has acute urinary retention or bladder outlet obstruction
Need for accurate measurements of urinary output in critically ill patients
Perioperative use for selected surgical procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients undergoing urologic surgery or other surgery on contiguous structures of the genitourinary tract • Anticipated prolonged duration of surgery (catheters inserted for this reason should be removed in PACU) • Patients anticipated to receive large-volume infusions or diuretics during surgery • Need for intraoperative monitoring of urinary output
To assist in healing of open sacral or perineal wounds in incontinent patients
Patient requires prolonged immobilization (e.g., potentially unstable thoracic or lumbar spine, multiple traumatic injuries such as pelvic fractures)
To improve comfort for end of life care if needed
B. Examples of Inappropriate Uses of Indwelling Catheters
As a substitute for nursing care of the patient or resident with incontinence
As a means of obtaining urine for culture or other diagnostic tests when the patient can voluntarily void
For prolonged postoperative duration without appropriate indications (e.g., structural repair of urethra or contiguous structures, prolonged effect of epidural anaesthesia, etc.)

Note: These indications are based primarily on expert consensus.

B. Consider using alternatives to indwelling urethral catheterization in selected patients when appropriate.

1. Consider using external catheters as an alternative to indwelling urethral catheters in cooperative male patients without urinary retention or bladder outlet obstruction. **(Category II)** (Key Question 2A)
2. Consider alternatives to chronic indwelling catheters, such as intermittent catheterization, in spinal cord injury patients. **(Category II)** (Key Question 1A)
3. Intermittent catheterization is preferable to indwelling urethral or suprapubic catheters in patients with bladder emptying dysfunction. **(Category II)** (Key Question 2A)
4. Consider intermittent catheterization in children with myelomeningocele and neurogenic bladder to reduce the risk of urinary tract deterioration. **(Category II)** (Key Question 1A)
5. Further research is needed on the benefit of using a urethral stent as an alternative to an indwelling catheter in selected patients with bladder outlet obstruction. **(No recommendation/unresolved issue)** (Key Question 1A)
6. Further research is needed on the risks and benefits of suprapubic catheters as an alternative to indwelling urethral catheters in selected patients requiring short- or long-term catheterization, particularly with respect to complications related to catheter insertion or the catheter site. **(No recommendation/unresolved issue)** (Key Question 2A)