OSCE checklist for urinary catheter care

An OSCE checklist for urinary catheter care covers hand hygiene, privacy, cleaning the meatus, keeping the drainage bag below the bladder and off the floor, emptying it safely, and asking each day if the catheter is still needed.

OSCE checklist for urinary catheter care: steps to practise

1. Check the care plan and the reason for the catheter. Ask about discomfort, leaking and any change in urine.
2. Wash or rub your hands, put on an apron and gloves, and gather soap and water or your policy's cleaning product, a towel and a clean container.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. Close the curtains.
4. Check the catheter is secured to the leg or abdomen and is not pulling.
5. Clean the area around the meatus and the first part of the catheter with soap and water, wiping away from the meatus.
6. Dry gently, and replace the foreskin if one was retracted.
7. Check the bag is below the bladder, not touching the floor, and the tubing has no kinks.
8. To empty it, use a clean container for each patient, open the outlet without touching it, and clean it afterwards.
9. Observe the urine: colour, clarity, smell and amount. Note any blood, debris or fever.
10. Dispose of waste, remove gloves, and wash your hands.
11. Record the care, urine output and observations, and ask whether the catheter is still needed.

What candidates commonly forget

- Cleaning away from the meatus.
- Keeping the closed system closed.
- Bag below bladder level but not on the floor.
- Using a separate container for each patient.

- Reviewing the need for the catheter every day.

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy. Cleaning solutions and routines differ between hospitals and countries, and between short-term and long-term catheters. Use your local policy. You can practise with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. See also the general OSCE nursing checklist.

Common questions

Where should the drainage bag be?

Below the level of the bladder and off the floor, with the tubing free of kinks.

What urine changes do I report?

Blood, cloudy or smelly urine, a sudden drop in output, fever or pain.

Why review the need for the catheter?

Catheters raise the risk of infection, so it should stay only as long as it is needed.

Sources

- NHS: Urinary catheters
- NICE QS61: Infection prevention and control
- NICE CG139: Healthcare-associated infections in primary and community care

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.