Access Device Standards of Practice
FOR ONCOLOGY NURSING

Edited by
Dawn Camp-Sorrell, RN, MSN, FNP, AOCN®
Laurl Matey, MSN, RN, CHPN®

Oncology Nursing Society
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
To our mothers, who brought us together in so many ways.

–Dawn Camp-Sorrell and Laurl Matey
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The contributors provided the following disclosure and vested interest information:

Laurl Matey, MSN, RN, CHPN: American Nurses Association, consultant or advisory role; Grand Canyon University School of Nursing, leadership role

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Chapter 8. Apheresis Catheters ........................................ 75
I. History .................................................................. 75
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 75
III. Device features ..................................................... 75
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 75
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 75
VI. Insertion techniques .............................................. 75
VII. Unique maintenance and care ................................ 76
VIII. Removal technique ............................................. 77
IX. Complications ..................................................... 77
X. Education and documentation .................................. 77
XI. Practicum on apheresis catheter care ......................... 77
References ................................................................ 77

Chapter 9. Complications of Long-Term Venous Access Devices ………… 79
I. Prevention of complications .................................... 79
II. Insertion procedure–related complications .................... 9
III. Postinsertion complications and management ............... 89
References ................................................................ 95

Chapter 10. Subcutaneous (Hypodermoclysis) Infusion Devices ............... 99
I. History .................................................................. 99
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 99
III. Device features ..................................................... 99
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 99
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 99
VI. Insertion techniques .............................................. 100
VII. Unique maintenance ............................................ 101
VIII. Removal technique ............................................. 102
IX. Complications ..................................................... 103
X. Education and documentation .................................. 103
References ................................................................ 103

Chapter 11. Arterial Access Devices ........................................ 105
I. History .................................................................. 105
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 105
III. Device features ..................................................... 105
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 106
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 106
VI. Insertion technique .............................................. 106
VII. Maintenance and care .......................................... 107
VIII. Removal Technique (Barosh et al., 2011; Deschamps et al., 2010)........ 109
IX. Complication ........................................................ 110
X. Education and documentation .................................. 111
References ................................................................ 111

Chapter 12. Intraventricular Access Devices ........................................ 113
I. History .................................................................. 113
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 113
III. Device features ..................................................... 113
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 113
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 113
VI. Insertion technique .............................................. 113
VII. Maintenance and care .......................................... 114
VIII. Removal technique ............................................. 115
IX. Complications ..................................................... 115
X. Education and documentation .................................. 115
XI. Patient education special considerations ..................... 116
XII. Special considerations .......................................... 116
References ................................................................ 116

Chapter 13. Epidural and Intrathecal Access Devices ............... 119
I. History .................................................................. 119
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 119
III. Device features ..................................................... 120
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 120
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 121
VI. Insertion technique .............................................. 121
VII. Maintenance and care unique to the device ................. 123
IX. Removal technique .............................................. 125
X. Complications ..................................................... 125
XI. Education and documentation .................................. 128
References ................................................................ 128

Chapter 14. Intraperitoneal Catheters ........................................ 131
I. History .................................................................. 131
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 131
III. Device features ..................................................... 131
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 132
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 132
VI. Insertion technique .............................................. 132
VII. Unique maintenance and care ................................ 133
VIII. Special considerations .......................................... 136
IX. Removal technique .............................................. 137
X. Complications ..................................................... 137
XI. Education and documentation .................................. 137
XII. Practicum on IP catheters ...................................... 137
References ................................................................ 137

Chapter 15. Pleural Catheters ........................................ 139
I. History .................................................................. 139
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 139
III. Device features ..................................................... 139
IV. Device advantages and disadvantages ......................... 140
V. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 140
VI. Insertion techniques .............................................. 141
VII. Unique maintenance and care ................................ 142
VIII. Removal technique ............................................. 144
IX. Complications ..................................................... 144
X. Education and documentation .................................. 144
XI. Practicum on pleural catheters .................................. 144
References ................................................................ 145

Chapter 16. Ambulatory Infusion Pumps ........................................ 147
I. History .................................................................. 147
II. Device characteristics ........................................... 147
III. Device features ..................................................... 147
IV. Patient selection criteria ......................................... 149
V. Maintenance and care: Refer to manufacturer instructions for operational procedure prior to use ........... 149
VI. Complications ..................................................... 150
VII. Education and documentation .................................. 151
References ................................................................ 151

Chapter 17. Education, Documentation, and Legal Issues for Access Devices ........................................ 153
I. Education ............................................................. 153
II. Staff training and education ...................................... 153
III. Patient documentation ........................................... 153
IV. Legal issues .......................................................... 156
References ................................................................ 159
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AANA</td>
<td>American Association of Nurse Anesthetists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTT</td>
<td>aseptic no-touch technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APN</td>
<td>advanced practice nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRN</td>
<td>advanced practice registered nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSI</td>
<td>bloodstream infection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHG</td>
<td>chlorhexidine gluconate</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLABS</td>
<td>central line–associated bloodstream infection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNS</td>
<td>central nervous system</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRBS</td>
<td>catheter-related bloodstream infection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>cerebrospinal fluid</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>computed tomography</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVAD</td>
<td>central venous access device</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>central venous catheter</td>
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<tr>
<td>DER</td>
<td>dose error reduction system</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVT</td>
<td>deep vein thrombosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMR</td>
<td>electronic medical record</td>
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<tr>
<td>EtOH</td>
<td>ethanol</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>hydrochloric acid</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICU</td>
<td>intensive care unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>IJ</td>
<td>internal jugular</td>
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<tr>
<td>INR</td>
<td>international normalized ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>Infusion Nurses Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>intraperitoneal</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>interventional radiology</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>intravenous</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMWH</td>
<td>low-molecular-weight heparin</td>
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<td>MPE</td>
<td>malignant pleural effusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>magnetic resonance imaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCN</td>
<td>National Comprehensive Cancer Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>0.9% normal saline</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONS</td>
<td>Oncology Nursing Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>operating room</td>
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<tr>
<td>PASV</td>
<td>pressure-activated safety valve</td>
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<tr>
<td>PICC</td>
<td>peripherally inserted central catheter</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIV</td>
<td>peripheral intravenous</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>registered nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>subcutaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVC</td>
<td>superior vena cava</td>
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<tr>
<td>TENS</td>
<td>transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>tPA</td>
<td>tissue plasminogen activator</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPN</td>
<td>total parenteral nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>VAD</td>
<td>venous access device</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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For decades, access devices have been used to deliver complex and diverse treatments to patients with cancer. IV therapy is an integral part of modern medicine and nursing, as it is practiced in every healthcare setting, from the hospital to the home. A new generation of access devices is quickly being adapted to provide a safe means to administer therapies into body systems, such as the peritoneal, arterial, epidural, pleural, or intraventricular spaces. The daily use of access devices is central to the care that oncology nurses provide to patients with cancer. With this increased complexity, nurses have an increased responsibility in maintaining access devices and a key role in preventing device-related complications.

Evolving technology continuously leads to newer devices and products used concurrently with access devices. This technology continues to improve on existing access devices to decrease the occurrence of the most frequent complications: infection and occlusion. Increased safety features, for both patient and provider, help to decrease accidental exposures or catheter malposition. As new products emerge, nurses must advance their knowledge to provide competent and safe care.

Little empirical evidence and research are available to support evidence-based nursing care related to venous access devices (VADs). Few randomized controlled trials have been conducted to definitively support nursing practices. Practice continues to be dictated by manufacturer recommendations or manufacturer in vitro clinical trials performed for U.S. Food and Drug Administration device or product approval. Government regulations also dictate care from the standpoint of insurance reimbursement, but without clear evidence to support specific practices; in the absence of evidence but in the face of reimbursement losses, practices may be adopted without clear evidence to support them. Expert opinion and institution-specific historical data often are used to develop policies.

Oncology nurses must base practice on evidence-based research when available, but lack of evidence is a professional challenge. Given this, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) recognizes that both the unique complexities of patients with cancer and the extensive use of access devices in this population warrants standards and recommendations that meet the specific needs of nurses who specialize in oncology nursing. ONS is well-positioned to define the standards of excellence for access device management in the specialty of oncology nursing and has continually updated its access device recommendations since 1989. Terminology used in Access Device Standards of Practice for Oncology Nursing is deliberately chosen to distinguish between evidence-based practices and those for which no definitive evidence is available.

Access Device Standards of Practice for Oncology Nursing was developed through a multiphasic process, beginning with an exhaustive analysis of empirical research, meta-analytical summaries, case reports, and review articles. PubMed, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, Cochrane Library, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects, National Guideline Clearinghouse, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, and Turning Research Into Practice databases were queried to ensure complete data inclusion. Although the main focus of these standards is the adult population, research conducted with pediatric populations is included when available and when appropriate to extrapolate findings to adults. Following this synthesis of evidence, clinical experts working in the field of oncology nursing developed each chapter. Several editorial review cycles followed to ensure accuracy and inclusion of all relevant data. Field reviewers, including the Infusion Nurses Society, were invited to provide in-depth analysis and feedback. An open public comment period was offered to ensure a rigorous and transparent review process. Appendix 1 provides evidence demonstrating the strength on which standard statements are made.

The ONS Board of Directors defines the characteristics of a standard as “an authoritative document that provides requirements, specifications, and/or characteristics that shall be used consistently across practice settings to ensure that nursing actions, processes, and services are used to achieve desired optimal results” (www.ons.org/practice-resources/standards-reports). Practice statements in this publication are identified as standards, recommendations, or as practice for which no evidence can support a definitive statement in
the case of lacking evidence. The following language is used to identify these statements:

- **Practice standard:** Evidence is sufficient to conclude the acceptance of this practice.

- **Practice recommendation:** Evidence is less robust; expert opinion, generally accepted practice, and sound nursing judgement warrant consideration of this practice.

- **No definitive recommendation can be made:** Evidence is lacking to support a definitive practice.

The Standards have been developed from this synthesis of evidence, critical review, and analysis, focusing on those aspects of VAD management for which nursing is accountable and directly associated with VAD care. Historical evidence, when provided, is offered when recent evidence is lacking or to underscore the strength of a standard statement.

Ongoing surveillance of infection and occlusion rates and daily evaluation of access device use will help any institution evaluate policies to determine if revisions in practice are needed. Access device manufacturer websites should be consulted for recommendations on specific brand and device types. With limited research to guide practice, ongoing controversies remain concerning optimal management. Developing the expertise needed to successfully manage access devices is a continual challenge to nursing professionals. The intent of these standards is to provide the foundation for evidence-based practice to guide individual oncology nursing practice.

*Access Device Standards of Practice for Oncology Nursing* is arranged in chapters for ease of use. Chapter 1 critically reviews controversies in access device care. Standard statements and recommendations made are based on the evidence presented. The remaining chapters detail each venous and specialty device. Patient selection criteria and advantage/disadvantage tables within each chapter can be used to select the best device based on the patient’s needs. Chapter 17 explores recommended documentation and key legal ramifications concerning access devices and their management. Examples of competency practicums are provided as appendices.

It is clear that, despite the lack of evidence-based practice for care of access devices, patient quality of life has greatly improved over the past decades with the advances in access device technology. *Access Device Standards of Practice for Oncology Nursing* explores the latest technologies, management procedures, and the controversies that remain.

Dawn Camp-Sorrell, RN, MSN, FNP, AOCN®
Laurl Matey, MSN, RN, CHPN®