

Selecting an Antimicrobial Ointment for Hemodialysis Catheter Exit Sites

CDC recommends using povidone iodine ointment or bacitracin/gramicidin/polymyxin B ointment at the hemodialysis catheter exit site after catheter insertion and at each hemodialysis session.

Bacitracin/gramicidin/polymyxin B ointment is not currently available in the United States. Triple antibiotic ointment (bacitracin/neomycin/polymyxin B) is available and might have a similar benefit but studies have not thoroughly evaluated its effect for prevention of bloodstream and exit-site infections. Other ointments that have been studied include single antibiotic ointments (e.g., mupirocin). However, concerns exist about development of antimicrobial resistance and also their ability to cover the spectrum of potential pathogens (e.g., gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria) that can cause bloodstream infections in dialysis patients.

Another important consideration is that ingredients in antibiotic and povidone-iodine ointments may interact with the chemical composition of certain catheters. Therefore, before any product is applied to the catheter, first check with the catheter manufacturer to ensure that the selected ointment will not interact with the catheter material. See the [Catheter Compatibility](#) page for more information.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/dialysis/prevention-tools/core-interventions.html>