

**Abstract:**

**Topic:** This article presents an overview of the burden of peripheral intravenous catheter infections and current evidence-based recommendations for prevention.

**Clinical relevance:** Peripheral intravenous catheters are ubiquitous in most health care settings, fostering an acceptance of the peripheral intravenous catheter as benign and inevitable. This device, however, is far from benign, with reported failure rates as high as 90% from complications such as infection and phlebitis. Although reported rates of bloodstream infection related to peripheral intravenous catheters are much lower than those attributed to central venous catheters, the exponentially higher use of peripheral intravenous catheters indicates that the absolute number of peripheral venous catheter-related bloodstream infections is likely as high as and may surpass the number of central venous catheter-related bloodstream infections, with significant associated morbidity and mortality.

**Purpose of paper:** Sustained improvements in outcomes related to peripheral intravenous catheters will depend on recognition of the root causes of failure and increased commitment to practice patterns consistent with infusion therapy standards of practice, effective education about peripheral intravenous catheters, accurate documentation of all aspects of peripheral intravenous catheter management, and consistent surveillance of patient outcomes related to peripheral intravenous catheters.

**Content covered:** This article reviews the significant burden of peripheral intravenous catheter infections, barriers to effective peripheral intravenous catheter management, and current evidence-based recommendations to prevent this source of patient harm.

**Reference:**

Nickel B. Hiding in Plain Sight: Peripheral Intravenous Catheter Infections. *Crit Care Nurse*. 2020 Oct 1;40(5):57-66. doi: 10.4037/ccn2020439. PMID: 33000133.