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Technical Considerations for Tunneled Dialysis Catheter Placement

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1. Clinical Image

Immediate hemodialysis access can readily be achieved with placement of a tunneled dual lumen dialysis catheter. These catheters should accommodate 300-500 ml/min flow. Excessive angulation at the insertion point can lead to early catheter malfunction or thrombosis. The accompanying image describes a catheter suffering early thrombosis that was repaired with replacement and more lateral tunneling. Ensuring a less acute angle at the tunnel transition will help ensure reliable flow rates and early catheter function. If the insertion point is more than 1-2 cm from the clavicle, this may also excessively angulate the catheter position. A higher entry point can be partially mitigated by blunt dissection with a hemostat at the time of insertion.