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running the water through the catheter; rinsing thoroughly with clear water; rinsing with saline; rinsing with household vinegar diluted 1:2; and storing in a presterilized clean jar. I do teach the method of making saline at home. The disposable catheter is used for 24 hours and cleaned as described after each use. Although anecdotal, the hospitalizations for pneumonia, respiratory infections, or tracheostomy prob lems have been nonexistent for five years. I know I should do a measured observation, but somehow there just isn't the time when you are caring for patients.

I really feel that the article was timely, realistic, and helpful for practitioners who want to incorporate some scientific measurements into their practices. There is no budget, there are poor facilities, there are cultural differences, there are no cleaning products at all, there are no modern toilets, there may not be any tables, chairs, or beds as we know them, and there may not be a home.

Jacquelyne E. Krikis, RN
Seal Beach, California

The authors were asked to respond to this letter.

Ms Krikis raises several issues related to "Infection Control for Home Health" (1990;11(7):362-370). Vinegar is not recommended for disinfection because, as the article states, products containing vinegar do not contain a known, standard amount of acetic acid (the active antimicrobial ingredient of vinegar). Many publications in nursing journals recommend vinegar for home disinfection, but at varying dilutions. We know of no information showing that vinegar is active at the dilutions used in homes and that it is not contaminated with potentially pathogenic microorganisms. Further, the manufacturers of vinegar cannot recommend or defend its use as a disinfectant, since that would be against the law. Disinfectants promoted for use on medical devices require approval by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We do not believe there is adequate evidence that patients using vinegar disinfection do not get infected. There are, however, many alternative methods of disinfection that have been well studied and are inexpensive. We hope that home health nurses accept the challenge implied in our article and study vinegar disinfection in a scientific manner.

Boiling water kills vegetative bacteria, like *Pseudomonas* and *Legionella* species, that frequently grow in potable water. One would not want to disinfect any device in boiling water unless it was thermostable. Red rubber catheters could be disinfected, if reused, by some of the alternative means of disinfection mentioned in our article.

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