

CATHETER TUBING WITH EXTRALUMINAL ANTIMICROBIAL COATING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to catheters having an antimicrobial coating on an outside surface of the catheter tubing and to methods for manufacturing such catheters.

[0002] Peripherally inserted central catheters and other central venous catheters have been associated with increased rates of nosocomial infection. Typically, nosocomial infections resulting from catheters are due to biofilm formation along the outer surface of the catheter tubing. To address this issue, many central venous catheters are manufactured with an antimicrobial coating on the outer surfaces of the catheter tubing. Such coatings minimize the possibility that microbes will colonize on the surface while the catheter tubing is positioned within the vasculature of the patient.

[0003] Peripheral intravenous catheters typically have shorter dwell times than central venous catheters which inherently reduces the risk of biofilm formation on the outer surfaces of peripheral intravenous catheters. In spite of this, there is still a risk of nosocomial infection due to biofilm formation on the outer surfaces of peripheral intravenous catheters.

[0004] Although the current techniques used for applying antimicrobial coatings to the outer surface of catheter tubing are effective for central venous catheters, these techniques are oftentimes inadequate for peripheral intravenous catheters. For example, peripheral intravenous catheters are oftentimes configured to allow blood flashback to be visible during insertion of the catheter. The coatings typically used on central venous catheters, however, have poor transparency and therefore block the visibility of the flashback. Also, during manufacture of peripheral intravenous catheters, it is common to stretch the tubing during flaring or swaging processes. When catheter tubing that has been treated using current antimicrobial coatings is stretched, the coating oftentimes tears rendering the catheter unusable. Accordingly, current techniques for applying an antimicrobial coating to catheter tubing have proven to be inadequate for use on peripheral intravenous catheters.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention extends to catheters that include an antimicrobial coating on an outer surface of the catheter tubing and to methods for manufacturing catheters with such coatings. The antimicrobial coating minimizes the risk of microbe colonization on the outer

surface of the catheter tubing when the catheter tubing is positioned within the vasculature of a patient.

[0006] In some embodiments, a catheter can be manufactured using a pre-treatment process which applies the antimicrobial coating to the catheter tubing prior to applying a lubricant over top of the coating. In such cases, the lubricant can function to retain the coating on the outer surface and also to limit the diffusion of the antimicrobial agent from the coating.

[0007] In some embodiments, a catheter can include an antimicrobial coating that does not block the visibility of flashback. Because the antimicrobial coating can be minimally transparent, the coating can be applied to the outer surface in a striped pattern or other pattern that leaves a portion of the outer surface uncoated or minimally coated. The flashback will then remain visible through the portions of the catheter tubing where no coating or minimal coating is present.

[0008] In one exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as method for applying an antimicrobial coating on catheter tubing. A solution containing a solvent and an antimicrobial agent can be applied to a surface of catheter tubing. The solvent is then allowed to evaporate to leave behind a coating of the antimicrobial agent on the surface of the catheter tubing. A lubricant is then applied overtop the coating. The lubricant limits the rate of diffusion of the antimicrobial agent from the coating once the surface of the catheter tubing is subject to a fluid.

[0009] In some embodiments, the solvent has a vapor pressure that is at least equal to atmospheric pressure at a first temperature with the first temperature being the maximum safe temperature of the antimicrobial agent.

[0010] In some embodiments, the solvent comprises ethanol and the antimicrobial agent comprises chlorhexidine gluconate.

[0011] In some embodiments, the solvent causes the catheter tubing to expand to allow the antimicrobial agent to penetrate into the catheter tubing.

[0012] In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as a method for applying an antimicrobial coating to catheter tubing in a pattern. An antimicrobial coating is applied over an outer surface of catheter tubing. The catheter tubing is then passed through a die to remove a portion of the antimicrobial coating from the outer surface such that a pattern of antimicrobial coating remains on the outer surface after the catheter tubing has passed through the die.

[0013] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises one or more stripes of antimicrobial coating.

[0014] In some embodiments, the outer surface of the catheter tubing comprises one or more channels and the pattern comprises the antimicrobial coating within the one or more channels.

[0015] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises one or more portions of the outer surface that do not include the antimicrobial coating or that include an insignificant amount of the antimicrobial coating so that contents of a lumen of the catheter tubing remain visible through the one or more portions.

[0016] In some embodiments, the pattern conforms to radiopaque material contained within the catheter tubing.

[0017] In some embodiments, the die includes one or more channels on an inner surface of the die. The one or more channels form the pattern.

[0018] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing comprises a segment of catheter tubing having a tip, and the antimicrobial coating is not applied to the tip.

[0019] In some embodiments, prior to applying the antimicrobial coating to the outer surface of the catheter tubing, a mandrel is inserted into one end of the catheter tubing to prevent the antimicrobial coating from entering the end. In some embodiments, this end comprises an end opposite a tip formed on the catheter tubing.

[0020] In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as catheter tubing that comprises an outer surface having a circumference; and an antimicrobial coating applied to the outer surface in a pattern such that the pattern does not cover the entire circumference of the outer surface.

[0021] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises a plurality of stripes that are formed on the outer surface by passing the catheter tubing through a die after the antimicrobial coating is applied over the entire circumference of the outer surface.

[0022] In some embodiments, the plurality of stripes are formed within a plurality of channels in the outer surface.

[0023] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing further comprises strips of radiopaque material that extend along a length of the catheter tubing. The plurality of stripes of the pattern run substantially parallel with the strips of radiopaque material.

[0024] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing comprises a tip to which the antimicrobial coating does not extend.

[0025] This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the Detailed Description. This Summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter.

[0026] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by the practice of the invention. The features and advantages of the invention may be realized and obtained by means of the instruments and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. These and other features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0027] In order to describe the manner in which the above-recited and other advantages and features of the invention can be obtained, a more particular description of the invention briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are not therefore to be considered to be limiting of its scope, the invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[0028] Figures 1A-1C illustrate a portion of a catheter tubing 100 during various stages of manufacture. Figure 1A illustrates catheter tubing 100 prior to the application of an antimicrobial coating. Figure 1B illustrates catheter tubing 100 after the application of an antimicrobial coating 101. Figure 1C illustrates catheter tubing 100 after the application of a lubricant 102 overtop of antimicrobial coating 101.

[0029] Figures 2A-2D illustrate a process of applying the antimicrobial coating 101 and lubricant 102 to catheter tubing 100 in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention. Figure 2A illustrates catheter tubing 100 being dipped into a solution 200 that includes an evaporating solvent and an antimicrobial agent. Figure 2B illustrates catheter tubing 100 after being removed from solution 200 with the evaporating solvent evaporating while leaving the antimicrobial agent on the outer surface of catheter tubing 100. Figure 2C illustrates antimicrobial coating 101 that remains on catheter tubing 100 after the evaporating solvent has evaporated. Figure 2D illustrates a lubricant 102 that has been applied to catheter tubing 100 overtop of antimicrobial coating 101.

[0030] Figures 3A-3C illustrate a catheter tubing 300 that includes an antimicrobial coating 301 that is applied to the catheter tubing in a pattern that generally aligns with

radiopaque material 305 contained within the catheter tubing. Figure 3A illustrates a perspective view of catheter tubing 300 with strips of radiopaque material 305 running lengthwise within the catheter tubing. Figure 3B illustrates a cross-sectional view of catheter tubing 300. Figure 3C illustrates catheter tubing 300 once antimicrobial coating 301 is applied to the exterior surfaces of the catheter tubing overtop the strips of radiopaque material 305.

[0031] Figures 4A-4C illustrate a catheter tubing 400 that includes radiopaque material 405 and channels 406 for containing an antimicrobial coating 301. Figure 4A illustrates a perspective view of catheter tubing 400 with strips of radiopaque material 405 running lengthwise within the catheter tubing. Figure 4B illustrates a cross-sectional view of catheter tubing 400 showing how channels 406 generally align with the strips of radiopaque material 405. Figure 4C illustrates catheter tubing 400 once antimicrobial coating 301 is applied within channels 406.

[0032] Figures 5A-5C illustrate how a die can be used to form a pattern of antimicrobial coating 301 on the exterior surfaces of a catheter tubing. Figure 5A illustrates a top view of an example die 580 having six channels 501 formed on the inner surface of the die for forming a six-stripped pattern. Figure 5B illustrates a cross-sectional view of catheter tubing 300 as it passes through die 580 thereby leaving six stripes of antimicrobial coating 301. Figure 5C illustrates how catheter tubing 300 can be passed through die 580 after the catheter tubing has been dipped in a solution containing antimicrobial coating 301.

[0033] Figures 6A and 6B illustrate how an antimicrobial coating can be applied to a portion of catheter tubing. Figure 6A illustrates an example of a catheter tubing 600 where the antimicrobial coating 301 has been applied to the body of the catheter tubing but not to the tip. Figure 6B illustrates how the antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied to catheter tubing 600 without applying the coating to the tip while using a dye 680 to apply the coating in a pattern.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] The present invention extends to catheters that include an antimicrobial coating on an outer surface of the catheter tubing and to methods for manufacturing catheters with such coatings. The antimicrobial coating minimizes the risk of microbe colonization on the outer surface of the catheter tubing when the catheter tubing is positioned within the vasculature of a patient.

[0035] In some embodiments, a catheter can be manufactured using a pre-treatment process which applies the antimicrobial coating to the catheter tubing prior to applying a

lubricant over top of the coating. In such cases, the lubricant can function to retain the coating on the outer surface and also to limit the diffusion of the antimicrobial agent from the coating.

[0036] In some embodiments, a catheter can include an antimicrobial coating that does not block the visibility of flashback. Because the antimicrobial coating can be minimally transparent, the coating can be applied to the outer surface in a striped pattern or other pattern that leaves a portion of the outer surface uncoated or minimally coated. The flashback will then remain visible through the portions of the catheter tubing where no coating or minimal coating is present.

[0037] In one exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as method for applying an antimicrobial coating on catheter tubing. A solution containing a solvent and an antimicrobial agent can be applied to a surface of catheter tubing. The solvent is then allowed to evaporate to leave behind a coating of the antimicrobial agent on the surface of the catheter tubing. A lubricant is then applied overtop the coating. The lubricant limits the rate of diffusion of the antimicrobial agent from the coating once the surface of the catheter tubing is subject to a fluid.

[0038] In some embodiments, the solvent has a vapor pressure that is at least equal to atmospheric pressure at a first temperature with the first temperature being the maximum safe temperature of the antimicrobial agent.

[0039] In some embodiments, the solvent comprises ethanol and the antimicrobial agent comprises chlorhexidine gluconate.

[0040] In some embodiments, the solvent causes the catheter tubing to expand to allow the antimicrobial agent to penetrate into the catheter tubing.

[0041] In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as a method for applying an antimicrobial coating to catheter tubing in a pattern. An antimicrobial coating is applied over an outer surface of catheter tubing. The catheter tubing is then passed through a die to remove a portion of the antimicrobial coating from the outer surface such that a pattern of antimicrobial coating remains on the outer surface after the catheter tubing has passed through the die.

[0042] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises one or more stripes of antimicrobial coating.

[0043] In some embodiments, the outer surface of the catheter tubing comprises one or more channels and the pattern comprises the antimicrobial coating within the one or more channels.

[0044] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises one or more portions of the outer surface that do not include the antimicrobial coating or that include an insignificant amount of the antimicrobial coating so that contents of a lumen of the catheter tubing remain visible through the one or more portions.

[0045] In some embodiments, the pattern conforms to radiopaque material contained within the catheter tubing.

[0046] In some embodiments, the die includes one or more channels on an inner surface of the die. The one or more channels form the pattern.

[0047] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing comprises a segment of catheter tubing having a tip, and the antimicrobial coating is not applied to the tip.

[0048] In some embodiments, prior to applying the antimicrobial coating to the outer surface of the catheter tubing, a mandrel is inserted into one end of the catheter tubing to prevent the antimicrobial coating from entering the end. In some embodiments, this end comprises an end opposite a tip formed on the catheter tubing.

[0049] In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention is implemented as catheter tubing that comprises an outer surface having a circumference; and an antimicrobial coating applied to the outer surface in a pattern such that the pattern does not cover the entire circumference of the outer surface.

[0050] In some embodiments, the pattern comprises a plurality of stripes that are formed on the outer surface by passing the catheter tubing through a die after the antimicrobial coating is applied over the entire circumference of the outer surface.

[0051] In some embodiments, the plurality of stripes are formed within a plurality of channels in the outer surface.

[0052] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing further comprises strips of radiopaque material that extend along a length of the catheter tubing. The plurality of stripes of the pattern run substantially parallel with the strips of radiopaque material.

[0053] In some embodiments, the catheter tubing comprises a tip to which the antimicrobial coating does not extend.

[0054] According to a first embodiment of the invention, a catheter tubing can be manufactured using a pretreatment process in which an antimicrobial coating is applied to the catheter tubing prior to applying a lubricant. A catheter tubing 100 manufactured using this pretreatment process is shown in Figures 1A-1C during various stages of manufacture. Figure 1A illustrates catheter tubing 100 prior to the application of an antimicrobial coating.

Catheter tubing 100 can be made of any material suitable for use intravenously as a catheter including polyurethane.

[0055] After passing through the pretreatment process, an antimicrobial coating 101 will be formed on the outer surfaces of catheter tubing 100 as is shown in Figure 1B. Then, as shown in Figure 1C, a lubricant 102 can be applied to catheter tubing overtop of antimicrobial coating 101. By applying lubricant 102 overtop of antimicrobial coating 101, the diffusion of antimicrobial agents within antimicrobial coating 101 can be limited to a desirable rate once catheter tubing 100 is positioned within the vasculature of a patient. In other words, the presence of lubricant 102 overtop of antimicrobial coating 101 slows the rate at which the antimicrobial agents dissolve from the coating into the bloodstream. This can minimize the possibility of toxicity due to an excess concentration of antimicrobial agents within the blood and also prolong the effective life of the coating.

[0056] Figures 2A-2D illustrate an example process for applying antimicrobial coating 101 and lubricant 102 to catheter tubing 100. In accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention, antimicrobial coating 101 can be applied to catheter tubing 100 using a process of applying a solution to the exterior surfaces of the catheter tubing and then letting a solvent within the solution evaporate to leave behind a coating containing antimicrobial agents.

[0057] Figure 2A illustrates catheter tubing 100 being dipped into a solution 200 that contains a solvent and an antimicrobial agent. Figure 2A shows only a short portion of catheter tubing 100 being dipped; however, it is to be understood that substantial lengths of catheter tubing can be treated simultaneously in this manner. Further, although catheter tubing 100 is shown as already having a tip, in some embodiments, solution 200 can be applied to the catheter tubing prior to forming a tip or other feature on or within the catheter tubing. Also, in some embodiments, the end of catheter tubing 100 can be plugged to prevent solution 200 from entering the lumen of the tubing.

[0058] In some embodiments, the solvent and antimicrobial agent used in solution 200 can be chosen such that the vapor pressure of the solvent is approximately equal to or higher than atmospheric pressure at a temperature below the maximum safe temperature for the antimicrobial agent. In this way, an appropriate evaporation rate of the solvent can be obtained to ensure that the antimicrobial coating is appropriately formed. For example, solution 200 can comprise ethanol which has a vapor pressure of approximately 800 mmHg at 80°C (which is near atmospheric pressure at 80°C) and chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) which can be safely used up to 90°C.

[0059] In some embodiments, by applying solution 200 to catheter tubing 100, the solvent can cause catheter tubing 100 to expand or swell. This expansion increases the porosity of the catheter tubing material (e.g. a polymer such as polyurethane) thereby allowing the antimicrobial agent to penetrate into the material. Once the solvent has evaporated from catheter tubing 100 and the material has returned to its normal size, an amount of the antimicrobial agent will remain within the material and can therefore provide antimicrobial properties beyond the life of a coating that is only on the surface of the tubing.

[0060] Returning to the figures, Figure 2B illustrates catheter tubing 100 after it has been removed from solution 200. An amount of solution 200 remains on the surface of catheter tubing 100 from which the solvent evaporates. Evaporation may be accelerated by subjecting catheter tubing 100 to heat and/or reduced atmospheric pressure. As shown in Figure 2C, after the solvent has fully evaporated, an antimicrobial coating 101 is left behind.

[0061] Finally, as shown in Figure 2D, after antimicrobial coating 101 has been formed, a lubricant 102 can be applied (e.g. by spraying) overtop the coating. In addition to providing lubrication between catheter tubing 100 and a patient's skin, lubrication 102 can also act as a temporary sealant overtop of antimicrobial coating 101 to slow the rate at which the coating (or the antimicrobial agent within the coating) dissolves into a surrounding liquid such as blood.

[0062] In some embodiments, lubricant 102 can also contain an antimicrobial agent. In such cases, the antimicrobial agent within lubricant 102 can provide a microbial barrier at the insertion site of catheter tubing 100 where excess lubricant may pool upon insertion of the tubing. Suitable lubricants include those disclosed in U.S. Patent Publication No.: 2011/0065798 titled Anti-Infective Lubricant For Medical Devices And Methods For Preparing The Same, and U.S. Patent Publication No.: 2011/0009831 titled Antimicrobial Coating for Dermally Invasive Devices, each of which is incorporated herein by reference.

[0063] According to a second embodiment of the invention, an antimicrobial coating can be applied to a catheter tubing in a pattern. It may be desirable to apply a coating in a pattern (as opposed to a continuous layer covering the entire circumference of the tubing) for various reasons. For example, many coatings limit the visibility of flashback within the lumen of the catheter tubing. In such cases, the coating can be applied in a striped or other pattern that does not cover the entire circumference of the tubing thereby leaving portions of the catheter tubing free of the coating through which the flashback will remain easily visible. Also, continuous coatings are more prone to tear when the catheter tubing is hyper-stretched which

is common during the manufacture of peripheral intravenous catheters. In such cases, a non-continuous coating can be used to minimize the possibility of tearing.

[0064] Figures 3A-3C illustrate one example embodiment of how an antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied to a catheter tubing 300 in a striped pattern. In this example, catheter tubing 300 includes radiopaque strips 305 as is shown in the perspective view of Figure 3A and the cross-sectional view of Figure 3B. Radiopaque strips 305 can be incorporated into catheter tubing 300 to enhance the visibility of catheter tubing 300 in an x-ray. To retain a portion of catheter tubing 300 through which flashback may be easily visible, antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied in a striping pattern that generally aligns with the radiopaque strips 305.

[0065] Figure 3C illustrates how antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied on the outer surface of catheter tubing 300 in stripes. As shown, catheter tubing 300 includes six stripes of antimicrobial coating 301 that generally align with radiopaque strips 305. In this way, the portions of catheter tubing 300 between the radiopaque strips contain no or minimal antimicrobial coating 301 so as to not limit the visibility of flashback through these portions. Although the stripes of antimicrobial coating 301 are shown as being similar in width as the radiopaque strips 305, the stripes could have a greater or a lesser widths as desired.

[0066] Figures 4A-4C illustrate another example embodiment of how an antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied to a catheter tubing 400 in a striped pattern. Catheter tubing 400 is similar to catheter tubing 300 except that catheter tubing 400 includes channels 406 that run generally parallel to radiopaque strips 405 as is best shown in the cross-sectional view of Figure 4B. Antimicrobial coating 301 can be applied within these channels 406 while the portions of the outer surface of catheter tubing 400 remain free (or substantially free) of antimicrobial coating 301 to maintain the visibility of flashback through these portions.

[0067] In each of the embodiments depicted in Figures 3A-3C and 4A-4C, the antimicrobial coating 301 is not continuous around the entire circumference of the catheter tubing. Therefore, there is less likelihood that the antimicrobial coating will tear when the tubing is stretched. For example, even though these figures depict the catheter tubing as already having a tip, in some embodiments, the tip may be formed after the antimicrobial coating has been applied to the tubing. The non-continuous pattern of the coating will minimize the possibility that the coating will tear during tip formation, or during the process of securing the catheter to the catheter adapter, such as by swaging.

[0068] Also, in cases where the catheter tubing will be subject to a heat-forming process after the antimicrobial coating has been applied, the antimicrobial coating can consist of a

thermoplastic adhesive matrix (e.g. polyurethane) which will allow the coating to deform with the catheter tubing during the heat-forming process. For example, oftentimes a tip is formed on the catheter tubing using a heat-forming process. In such cases, the antimicrobial coating can consist of a thermoplastic adhesive matrix to allow the antimicrobial coating to conform to the angled tip so that the tip retains the antimicrobial coating. Accordingly, even though Figures 3A and 4A imply that the antimicrobial coating may not be applied to the tip, the techniques of the present invention facilitate applying a pattern of antimicrobial coating that may extend along the body as well as along the tip of the catheter tubing whether the tip is formed before or after the application of the antimicrobial coating.

[0069] Figures 5A-5C illustrate an example process for applying an antimicrobial coating in a striped pattern. As shown in Figure 5A, a die 580 can be used to apply the antimicrobial coating in a desired pattern. Die 580 includes a number of channels 501 that extends along its inner surfaces. As shown in Figure 5B, channels 501 are configured to apply a pattern similar to the pattern shown in Figure 3C (i.e. a pattern of six stripes that run generally parallel with the strips of radiopaque material).

[0070] Figure 5C illustrates how a catheter tubing 300 can be passed through die 580 after antimicrobial coating 301 has been applied to the outer surfaces of the tubing. As shown, catheter tubing 300 is dipped into a solution containing antimicrobial coating 301. Then, as catheter tubing 300 is pulled out from the solution, the tubing is passed through die 580. The inner diameter of die 580 is configured to conform closely to the outer diameter of catheter tubing 300 so that die 580 wipes the antimicrobial coating from the outer surfaces of the tubing. However, because die 580 includes channels 501, six stripes of antimicrobial coating 301 will remain on the outer surface of catheter tubing 300. In some embodiments, after the antimicrobial coating has been applied to the catheter tubing, the coating can be cured (e.g. using heat or UV light).

[0071] Although Figure 5C illustrates that catheter tubing 300 already includes a tip when the antimicrobial coating is applied, the tip could be formed after the coating is applied as described above. In such cases, by using a thermoplastic adhesive matrix, the antimicrobial coating can be reformed during a heat-forming process so that the stripes can conform to the angled surface of the tip. In this way, the antimicrobial stripes can extend along the full length of the catheter tubing.

[0072] In cases where the catheter tubing includes channels, a die without any channels (i.e. with a circular inner diameter) can be used to wipe the antimicrobial coating from all outer surfaces of the tubing thereby leaving the coating only within the channels. Also, dies

having channels forming different patterns can also be used. For example, a die having more or fewer channels than die 580 or with channels of various widths or depths could be used. Also, a spiral pattern could be applied by rotating a die (or the catheter tubing) when the catheter tubing is passed through the die. Accordingly, the present invention extends to antimicrobial coating patterns of various types.

[0073] Although Figures 3A-3C, 4A-4C, and 5A-5C illustrate the application of a coating on a catheter tubing that includes radiopaque strips, the techniques for applying the coating in a pattern can equally be used on catheter tubing that does not include radiopaque material. For example, the same pattern could be applied to catheter tubing 300 and catheter tubing 400 even if they did not contain radiopaque strips 305 and 405 respectively.

[0074] The technique for applying a pattern using a die can typically be used on substantial lengths of catheter tubing. For example, a length of catheter tubing sufficient for making a number of catheters could be dipped in the solution containing antimicrobial agent 301 and then passed through die 580. Then, the catheter tubing can be cut into segments of a desired length and a tip can be formed on the segments. In such cases, it may be desirable to use an antimicrobial coating consisting of a thermoplastic adhesive matrix since it is common to form the tip using a heat-forming process.

[0075] However, in some cases, it is desirable to use an antimicrobial coating that consists of thermoset polymers which cannot be heat reformed. Because such coatings cannot be heat reformed, it is desirable to form segments having tips prior to applying the antimicrobial coating.

[0076] Figures 6A and 6B illustrate an example embodiment of how an antimicrobial coating can be applied to a segment of catheter tubing so that the coating does not extend along the tip as is shown in Figure 6A. Because the above described processes involve dipping the catheter tubing into a solution containing the antimicrobial coating, an amount of the antimicrobial coating will enter into the lumen of the catheter tubing forming a coating on the inner surfaces of the tubing. This is not a problem when long lengths of catheter tubing are treated prior to cutting because the ends of the tubing can be cut off to remove any portion of the tubing having the coating on the inner surfaces. In contrast, when the catheter tubing is first cut into segments and tipped prior to receiving the antimicrobial coating, it is desirable to prevent the coating from entering into the lumen of the segments.

[0077] Figure 6B illustrates how a pattern of antimicrobial coating can be applied to a segment of catheter tubing 600 using a similar process as shown in Figures 5A-5C while preventing the coating from entering inside the lumen of the segment and without applying

the coating to the tip. As shown, prior to dipping the segment 600 in the solution containing the antimicrobial coating, a mandrel 670 is inserted into the end of segment 600 opposite the tip. The segment is then dipped mandrel end first into the solution while preventing the tip from being dipped. The segment can then be passed through die 680 to remove the excess antimicrobial coating and leave the desired pattern. The mandrel can then be removed.

[0078] In some embodiments, rather than removing the mandrel, the segment can be initially cut at a length that is slightly longer than necessary so that the portion of the segment containing the mandrel can be cut off. The resulting length of the segment after the mandrel is cut off can be the desired length for the catheter tubing.

[0079] In some embodiments, the formulations of antimicrobial coatings described in U.S. Patent Publication No.: 2010/0135949 titled Antimicrobial Coatings, which is incorporated by reference, can be used in the embodiments where a pattern is formed. In a specific example, such formulations can be applied to polyurethane catheter tubing and cured using UV light to form a chlorhexidine eluting layer that inhibits biofilm growth.

EXAMPLES

[0080] Example 1: Zone-of-Inhibition Test

[0081] 20 gauge x 1.25 inch catheters were pretreated to form an antimicrobial coating by dipping the catheters in a solution consisting of 5% CHG, 20% water, and 75% ethanol. The coated catheters were allowed to dry for two minutes. The coated catheters were then sprayed with a silicone lubricant emulsion containing 0.5% CHG w/w. Catheters that did not receive the pretreatment were also sprayed with the same lubricant emulsion. Small segments of both the pretreated and untreated catheters were then subjected to a zone-of-inhibition (ZOI) test. The pretreated catheters demonstrated up to 19mm ZOI for *Staphylococcus epidermidis*, while the untreated catheters demonstrated only 1.5mm ZOI.

[0082] The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for applying an antimicrobial coating to catheter tubing in a pattern, the method comprising:

applying an antimicrobial coating over an outer surface of catheter tubing; and

passing the catheter tubing through a die to remove a portion of the antimicrobial coating from the outer surface such that a pattern of antimicrobial coating remains on the outer surface after the catheter tubing has passed through the die.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the pattern comprises one or more stripes.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the outer surface of the catheter tubing comprises one or more channels, the pattern comprising the antimicrobial coating within the one or more channels.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the pattern comprises one or more portions of the outer surface that do not include the antimicrobial coating or that include an insignificant amount of the antimicrobial coating so that contents of a lumen of the catheter tubing remain visible through the one or more portions.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the pattern conforms to radiopaque material contained within the catheter tubing.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the die includes one or more channels on an inner surface of the die, the one or more channels forming the pattern.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the catheter tubing comprises a segment of catheter tubing having a tip, and wherein the antimicrobial coating is not applied to the tip.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to applying the antimicrobial coating to the outer surface of the catheter tubing, inserting a mandrel into one end of the catheter tubing to prevent the antimicrobial coating from entering the end.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the end comprises an end opposite a tip formed on the catheter tubing.