

Caring for Your Port at Home

General care

If you will be giving medicine or fluids or flushing the port, please follow the instructions we gave you. If you have questions or concerns, call your home care nurse or clinic.

Tips for safety:

- No contact sports.
- Tape the port tubing so it does not get caught on your clothing.
- Do not use sharp objects around your tubing.
- Always follow the instructions for flushing the port.
- Keep the clamp on the tubing closed unless you are using the port.
- Store all supplies for the port in a clean, dry place.

Prevent infection

You may get an infection if germs enter where the end cap connects to the tubing or where the needle goes into the port. While your port is in use, your home care nurse or clinic will change the needle, tubing, and end cap every 7 days.

Steps to prevent infection:

- Wash your hands for 15 seconds before touching

your port or any supplies. Use liquid soap and water or hand foam.

- Make sure the bandage is always clean, dry and sticking well to your skin. If not, change the bandage if you have been trained to do so. Otherwise, call your home care nurse or clinic.
- If you are going to take a shower, cover the bandage and port tubing with plastic wrap. Tape the edges well. Keep your port away from the shower spray.
- Before you connect any tubing or syringe to the port tubing, scrub the end cap with alcohol for 15 seconds. Allow to air dry.

Flush your port

- Flush after every use or every 24 hours when there is a needle in your port.
- Always flush slowly so you do not split or tear the catheter.
- If the port will not be used for several days or weeks, flush the port. Contact your home nurse to remove the needle and tubing.
- If you have not been trained on how to prepare the syringe, see *Flushing the Line with Heparin, Saline or Citrate*.

Check the needle position

Before you use your port, check that the needle is in the right place.

1. First, clean your work surface and wash your hands.
2. Prepare a saline syringe and scrub the end cap with alcohol for 15 seconds. Allow to air dry.
3. Twist the syringe into the end cap of the tubing.
4. Unclamp the tubing.
5. Next, slowly inject the saline.
6. Watch for swelling, pain or burning around the needle. **These are signs the needle is in the wrong place.** Call your home care nurse or clinic.
7. Clamp the tubing and remove the syringe.

If you do not have any of the problems described in step 6, you may use the port.

What to do if you have problems

Cannot push or drip medicines in

- The tubing may be clamped.
 - Make sure the clamp on the tubing is open.
- The catheter tip may be in a bad position.
 - Try to change the position of catheter tip: Lean forward, turn your head or raise the port-side arm over your head and cough.
- The needle may be in the wrong position.
 - Check the needle position by pushing down on needle. You may feel the bottom of the port.
 - If the needle is not at a 90-degree angle to the port, call your home care nurse or clinic.

Call your home care nurse or clinic if none of these steps work. You may have a clot in your port.

Prevention:

- Always flush with heparin (or saline for valved ports) within 5 to 10 minutes after fluids have been infused.
- Flush if you see blood leaking from the end cap.

You see swelling where tubing is inserted; feel pain, heat, burning or cold

- The tubing may have a leak.
 - Stop infusing fluids and clamp the tubing.
 - Call your home care nurse or clinic.

Prevention:

- Avoid rough contact sports.
- Tape the tubing so that it does not dangle.
- Flush slowly so you do not split or tear the tubing.

Leaking blood from end cap

- The end cap may be loose.
 - Clamp tubing.
 - Change end cap if you have been trained or call your home care nurse.
 - Flush.

Prevention:

- Screw the end cap on straight and tight.
- Tubing should be clamped except when using the port.

Coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain

- Air may have been drawn into the bloodstream.
 - Call 911.
 - If giving fluids, stop and clamp the tubing.
 - Remove the needle from the port if you have been trained.

Prevention:

- When changing the end cap, always clamp the tubing to keep air from being drawn into the vein.
- Keep tubing clamped when not in use.
- Check your syringe or tubing for air before infusing.

Redness, swelling, drainage or tenderness at port site. Or chills, fever, feel tired, achy or weak

- If you see any of these signs of infection, call your home care nurse or your clinic.

Prevention:

- Always clean your work surface and wash your hands before doing anything with your port.
- If the bandage gets soiled or becomes loose, change it if trained to do it. If not, call your home care nurse or clinic.
- When the needle is in place, keep the port area dry.
- Keep all supplies sterile (free of germs).

Where to call

Home Care: _____

Phone: _____

Monday to Friday hours: _____

Evenings and weekends: _____

Clinic: _____

Phone: _____

Monday to Friday hours: _____

Evenings and weekends: _____