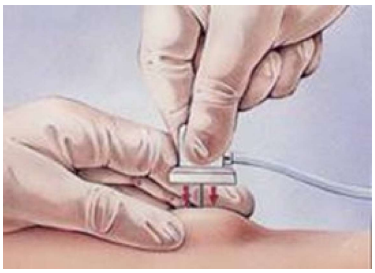
vitalcare INFUSION SERVICES

Your Subcutaneous Port for Home IV Therapy

Introduction



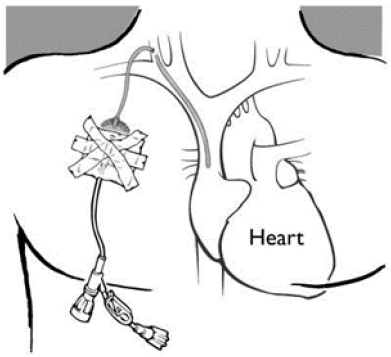
To give you the prescribed intravenous medications (also called **infusions**), your prescriber has inserted a device called a **subcutaneous venous port**. (We will just call it a **port**.)

Your port is a device that is placed underneath your skin that has a **catheter** placed into a vein that is near your heart.

A catheter is a thin tube made of a very soft and flexible material. It comes in different sizes and lengths. Your prescriber will select the type and size that is best for you.

When you are scheduled to receive an infusion, a special "non-coring" needle will be placed through the skin and into the port. A sterile dressing will be placed over the needle. The needle will be changed each week, or as needed, until you have finished your course of treatment.

Important Points About Your Catheter



- If your port is maintained properly, you can get many years use from it without complication.
- Your port system should be cared for so that it will not become infected or damaged. Your home care nurse will provide you with verbal and written information on how to maintain the port.
- Always feel free to ask questions if you are uncertain about using or maintaining your port.
- Your port must be handled correctly during your therapy to prevent infection or irritations. The port cannot fall out, but the non-core needle can be accidentally pulled out if it is not secured properly or if it is mishandled.
- Frequent hand washing decreases the risk of infection.
- Always clean the needleless connector with an alcohol pad for at least 15 seconds before attaching the administration tubing.

- Medication is inserted through the needle by attaching the tubing to the needleless connector on the end of the needle's extension. You will be taught by your home care nurse to do this properly, or someone will be doing this for you.
- If cared for correctly with saline and heparin "flushing" medications, your port catheter should not become clotted or clogged. Let your home care nurse or pharmacist know immediately if the port catheter is not performing properly.
- While your port is accessed, you can engage in your usual activities, within reason. As long as the dressing is kept dry, secured, and intact, there are no strict limitations. Avoid tub baths while your port is being accessed.
- Avoid movement of the needle at any time.

Signs or Symptoms to Report to Your Nurse or Pharmacist

- Pain or tenderness around your port
- Pain or tenderness while your infusion is being given
- Puffiness or swelling around your port or anywhere on your chest, neck, or arm
- Redness or any drainage around your port site
- Fever (100.5° or above)
- Clogging inside your port or a suddenly "sluggish" infusion
- Bleeding from your port
- Leaking of medications from your port
- Ringing in your ears or any pain in your ears or neck during your medication
- Heart palpitations
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or fainting

Notes and Instructions