

# Advice to Patients with a Cannula in the Community



## What is a cannula?

Your cannula is a small tube that has been placed into a vein. This is used to administer intravenous drugs and fluids.

The following information will help you and your carers understand a number of points in relation to its care.

## How should the cannula be cared for?

The point at which your cannula enters your skin must be kept clean and dry. Before the cannula is put in a member of staff will clean their hands and your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. A sterile transparent dressing will be placed over the cannula to keep the site clean. Staff will also observe the site through the dressing on a regular basis. Before staff can use your cannula, they must clean their hands.

They will then clean the connector that they use to join up drugs and fluids to your cannula. Before they administer your drugs or fluids they will use a small amount of saline in a syringe to flush and check the cannula is safe to use.

If you are not sure if the nurse has washed their hands, then it is acceptable to ask.  
If you have fluids in place, your line should not be disconnected to change clothes or shower.

## How will my cannula be held in place?

Your cannula will have been held to your skin with a special sterile transparent dressing. This dressing should be changed if soiled or becomes loose. Additional dressings such as bandages are not routinely used, however, this may be appropriate in certain situations. If bandages are used staff will remove these on a regular basis to check the cannula site.

## Should my cannula be replaced at set intervals?

Your cannula should be inspected by the nurse each time medicine is given to check for early signs of phlebitis (inflammation of the vein). The cannula should be removed if complications occur.

## What can I do to help?

- Inform the nursing staff or your carers if you have any concerns regarding your cannula, or if the dressing has become soiled or loose.
- Inform the nursing staff or your carers if the cannula has become painful.
- If your cannula has not been used for 24 hours, please remind the staff, you may be able to have it removed. Some patients will only require treatment every 2-3 days. your nurse will tell you if this is the case.
- The dressing is waterproof but it is still advisable not to immerse it in water.
- Avoid touching the cannula and try to protect it from knocks.
- Take extra care when dressing and undressing. Place a hand loosely over the cannula and wearing clothing with loose fitting sleeves will help.
- Avoid wearing jewellery on the same arm as the cannula.

## How else can I help?

If the following should happen contact Quest / Locala / District Nursing :

- If the skin is **Red, Hot, Sore, Puffy, Swollen, White** or **Hard**.
- If above the cannula site there is a noticeable Red Line which follows the vein.
- If pain is experienced either in or around the cannula site, or in the arm or leg where the cannula is sited.
- If the cannula site has blood or fluid leaking from the cannula

**The cannula may not always need to be replaced even if there is a problem.**

**If the cannula accidentally gets knocked out, the area will probably bleed slightly. Remove the dressing and cannula, then apply gently pressure for 1-2 minutes to stop any bleeding and then cover with a plaster or gauze and tape. The dressing should be left for at least 2 hours.**

**If you have any concerns regarding your cannula at home, please contact**

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**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

OPAT Co-ordinator

Telephone : 07795825106

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو  
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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