

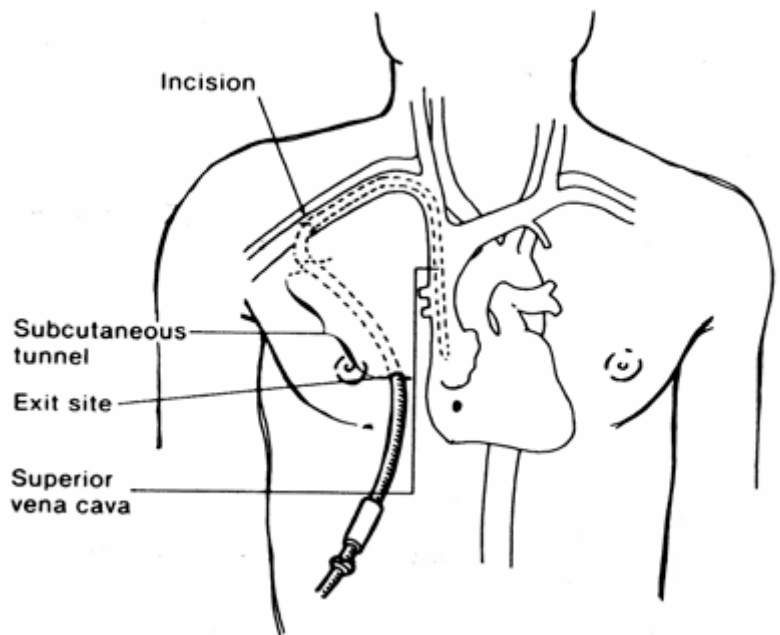
Caring for Your Hickman Catheter Patient Information

Caring for your Hickman catheter at home is not difficult. Your nurse will explain to you how to care for your catheter. Once you are at home you or your family will need to care for your catheter.

Understanding your Hickman Catheter

The Hickman catheter is a silastic (like plastic) tube with 1, 2 or 3 lumens (tubes) which has been surgically implanted under the skin and into a major blood vessel (superior vena cava or SVC). Sterile fluid, drugs or blood products can be administered through the catheter and blood tests can be taken from it.

Right is a diagram of the Hickman catheter insertion and exit sites. The Hickman catheter enters the body at the exit site, is tunnelled under the skin and enters the major blood vessel under the insertion site. The end of the catheter sits in a major blood vessel (SVC) just outside the heart.



Daily Care

1. Shower normally, gently wash around the catheter exit site using a clean wash cloth, taking care not to pull on the catheter
2. Dry the catheter and exit site with a clean towel
3. Inspect the site for anything unusual eg. Redness, discharge, swelling, bruising or change in length of the catheter. Check that the clamps are closed and the bungs are not loose.
4. Wash your hands with soap and water for one (1) minute and dry them on a clean towel.
5. Prepare 4 – 5 alcohol swabs as shown by your nurse.
6. Using an alcohol wipe, firmly hold the catheter at the exit site.
7. Using your other hand, take another swab and wipe down to where the catheter forks. Discard this swab only. Repeat the procedure twice. **Always wipe away from the exit site. Use each alcohol swab once only**
8. The exit site should be left uncovered if it is clean and dry. Your nurse will tell you if a dressing is required and for how long.
9. Your nurse will give you tape and alcohol wipes to take home. Secure the catheter by looping the tape around the catheter where it forks and tying tape at the back of the neck. The tape should be just long enough to prevent any tension at the exit site. The tape should be changed daily.

Safety Hints

- Hand washing before touching or handling your catheter is essential. Wash hands with soap and water for one

(1) minute and dry them with a clean towel before and after you touch your catheter.

- It is advised not to go swimming while you have a Hickman catheter.
- Shower and clean your Hickman catheter at least daily.
- Never use scissors or any sharp objects near your Hickman catheter.
- Check your Hickman catheter regularly for damage or leakage especially if it has been accidentally pulled or bumped.

Note: To prevent the catheter from blocking, each lumen **MUST** be flushed once a week. Make sure your nurse has given you an appointment to have this done. Each lumen must also be flushed after each access.

What to do in an emergency

If catheter falls out

- Immediately cover with sterile pad and apply pressure to the exit site.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately.

If catheter starts leaking

- Fold gauze in half and place around catheter between the leak and the exit site. Clamp the catheter using the green clamp and hold or tape it into position.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately.

If the Connectors come off

- Clamp the Hickman lumen and attach the spare connector in your Emergency pack.
- If the Hickman lumen does not have a clamp, fold gauze in half and place around catheter. Clamp the catheter using the green clamp and hold or tape it into position.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately

Checklist

If any of the following occur contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately:

- Increased redness at the insertion / exit site
- Discharge from the insertion / exit site
- Pain at or near the insertion / exit site
- Swelling at or near the insertion / exit site
- Movement of the catheter in or out of the exit site
- Clamps open
- Loss of the bung from the end of the catheter
- Any hole, ballooning, break or cut to the catheter

Contact Information

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Oncology Day Therapy Unit

Phone (07) 3646 8749

Business Hours:

7am – 6pm Monday – Friday

8am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday

North Lakes Cancer Care Services

Phone (07) 3646 1905

Business Hours:

8am – 5pm Monday – Thursday

Oncology Procedure Unit

Phone (07) 3646 1905

Business Hours:

7:30am – 5pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Contact Ward 5C or 6AS through the RBWH main switchboard

Phone: (07) 3646 8111

The Prince Charles Hospital Day Oncology Unit

Phone (07) 31395730

Business Hours:

8am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

TPCH Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 31394000

Redcliffe Day Oncology Unit

Phone (07) 38837196

Business Hours:

7:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Redcliffe Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 38837777

Kilcoy Hospital

Phone (07) 54338663

Business Hours:

8am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Kilcoy Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 54224411

It is important to note that this is only a reference. The best source of information is still your Primary Health Care Provider.

References

Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention Preventing intravascular device-related blood stream infections: recommended practices for the insertion and management of tunnelled central venous catheters 2007

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