



Implanted Port

PATIENT INSTRUCTION & SAFETY

A port, also called a central venous access device (CVAD), is a catheter placed under the skin to provide access to administer IV medications. Ports vary in shape and size, but most are disc-shaped and roughly the size of a quarter. Ports rest under the skin, typically in the chest just below the collarbone. Your port is connected to a small flexible tube, called a catheter. One end of the catheter is connected to the port and the other end rests in a large vein near your heart.

Ports can stay in place for long periods of time. When your port is not in use, it must be flushed monthly to make sure the catheter does not become blocked. When the port is being used, a special needle is used to draw blood or administer medications. It is important to keep the area clean and dry to avoid infection. Amber Specialty Pharmacy will coordinate with your health care team to help you manage your port. If you have any questions about your port or infusion therapy, you can contact Amber Specialty Pharmacy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Understanding Your Role

An Amber Specialty Pharmacy liaison or home health care nurse will teach you and your caregivers how to care for your port. These instructions will include how long you may need the central catheter line and when to schedule follow-up visits.

FLUSHING YOUR PORT WHEN NOT RECEIVING MEDICATION

Sometimes you will need to flush your port when you are not administering medication as part of routine maintenance. Amber Specialty Pharmacy standard protocol is to flush accessed, non-valved ports with saline and heparin 1-2 times per week. Accessed, valved ports should be flushed with saline weekly. Ports that are not accessed should be flushed monthly, according to Amber Specialty Pharmacy standards. Your Amber Specialty Pharmacy home health care team will provide specific instructions on how to care for your catheter in between infusions.

While your port is accessed, you may have more than one lumen. Depending on your specific infusion therapy, you may use one or both lumens for medication administration. Your Amber Specialty Pharmacy home health care team will help you understand which lumen to use. You will also learn how to care for the lumens in between medication administrations.

PROTECTING THE PORT

Most of the time, your port should be left alone. However, throughout the day your port site may need careful attention. Amber Specialty Pharmacy team members are experts in infusion therapy, so they will be your main contact for questions about your port or medication administration. Follow the instructions provided about caring for your port and remember these tips:

- Prevent infection by using good hand-washing techniques. Both you and your caregivers should thoroughly wash your hands before and after coming in contact with the port site. While your port is accessed, do not touch the port site unless it is necessary.
- Your port needle and dressing must stay dry. Most ports cannot be submerged in water. Consult with a member of your Amber Specialty Pharmacy health care team before spending time in bathtubs, swimming pools or hot tubs. Use a moisture barrier, such as an AquaGuard® shower shield, to cover your port needle while showering. Your Amber Specialty Pharmacy nurse liaison or home health care nurse will show you how to use a moisture barrier. Please notify a member of your health care team if your dressing does get wet.

PROTECTING THE PORT (cont'd)

- Protect your port access to prevent damage or injury. Do not use sharp or pointy objects, such as scissors, razors or knives, near your port needle. Do not allow anything to pull or rub on your port needle. Be especially mindful of the clothing you wear to prevent accidental pulling on your port needle. Loose-fitted clothing is recommended, especially when your port is accessed.
- Inspect your port twice a day, once while dressing and again when undressing. If you notice unexpected changes of any kind, please contact your Amber Specialty Pharmacy pharmacist or a member of your health care team. If your port needle and dressing become loose, wet or dirty, call your Amber Specialty Pharmacy health care team.
- Talk with your Amber Specialty Pharmacy health care team if you are vomiting or have a severe cough. The stress of these actions may disrupt the port site, causing your needle to shift from its proper position.
- Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated.
- If your port is located in your arm, do not lift objects over 10 pounds with that arm.
- Prevent pressure on the port by placing a pillow or towel in between your seatbelt and the device.
- Do not apply heating or cooling pads to your port.

GOOD HYGIENE & PROPER HAND-WASHING TIPS

To prevent infection, it is important that you and your caregivers keep your port dressing clean. This starts with good hygiene and proper hand-washing. Washing your hands with soap and water is essential to your care. Remember, never touch the port site or dressing without taking time to wash your hands using these suggestions:

- Wet your hands with warm water. Avoid hot water, which can lead to skin irritations.
- Use antibacterial soap to cover the entire surface of your hands and fingers.
- While washing, rub your hands together vigorously for at least 30 seconds. Make sure to rub the front and back of each hand up to your wrists, including your fingers, fingernails and between each finger and thumb.
- Rinse your hands thoroughly with warm water.
- Dry your hands completely with clean unused paper towels. Do not use reusable or cloth towels because they can carry germs.
- Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet, and then throw the towel away. When needed, use the paper towel to open the bathroom door to avoid touching the door handle.
- After you have thoroughly washed and dried your hands, you may also want to apply hand sanitizer. Cover your hands with sanitizer and allow them to air dry.

MONITORING YOUR INFUSION THERAPY & WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP

Contact a member of your Amber Specialty Pharmacy health care team immediately if you experience any of the following:

- A painful burning sensation in your chest, shoulder, arm or leg
- Tightness in your chest or around the port
- A temperature of 100.5°F or higher
- Chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Coughing or shortness of breath
- Hives, rash or itching
- Irregular heartbeat
- Aches or muscle stiffness
- Your port needle or tubing leaks, kinks, twists, breaks or has become damaged
- Swelling or a growing bruise around the port site
- New or increased pain around the port site

Contact Us

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