



# Peripheral IV Catheters

## CARING FOR YOUR PERIPHERAL IV (PIV) CATHETER

The peripheral intravenous catheter (PIV), also called a peripheral IV, is one of the most common devices in medicine today. This catheter is a small, flexible tube placed in a vein of the hand or forearm. A small needle is used to advance the catheter into the vein. The needle is then withdrawn, leaving behind the flexible tubing. The catheter is secured to your skin using tape or a clear dressing. PIVs are typically used to administer fluids and certain antibiotics.

Amber Specialty Pharmacy will coordinate with your health care team to help you manage your PIV catheter and the rest of your infusion therapy. Proper care of your PIV catheter, including good hygiene and hand-washing, is extremely important to avoid infection or complications. Amber Specialty Pharmacy and your home health care nurse will equip you to successfully and confidently care for your PIV catheter at home.

### Understanding Your Role:

- An Amber Specialty Pharmacy liaison or home health care nurse will teach you and your caregiver how to care for your PIV catheter properly when you are home. Amber Specialty Pharmacy will make sure you understand what to do at home, when to schedule follow-up visits and whom to contact if you have questions.
- Your home health care nurse will teach you how to administer your medication safely using the proper technique.

With proper training from your Amber Specialty Pharmacy liaison and home health care nurse, you will learn to safely administer your infusion medication. A home health care nurse will ensure you are taking good care of your PIV catheter in between your regular in-home visits. Always follow the instructions provided. You can contact Amber Specialty Pharmacy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you have any questions.

## FLUSHING YOUR CATHETER WHEN NOT RECEIVING MEDICATION

Sometimes you will need to flush your PIV catheter when you are not administering medication as part of routine maintenance. Amber Specialty Pharmacy standard protocol for peripheral catheters is to flush with saline every 12 hours. Your Amber Specialty Pharmacy home health care team will provide specific instructions on how to care for your catheter in between infusions.

## PROTECTING THE PIV CATHETER

- Prevent infection by using good hand-washing techniques. You and your caregiver should take extra precautions and prioritize cleanliness. Do not touch the PIV catheter unless it is necessary. Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after caring for your PIV catheter. If your PIV catheter is in a vein in your hand, take special care not to get your dressing wet.
- Keep the PIV catheter dry. Your catheter and dressing must stay dry. Consult with your doctor before spending time in bathtubs, swimming pools or hot tubs. Use a moisture barrier, such as an AquaGuard® shower shield, to cover your PIV catheter 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.
- Protect your PIV catheter to prevent damage or injury. Do not use sharp or pointy objects, such as scissors, razors or knives, near your PIV catheter. Do not allow anything to pull or rub on your PIV catheter. Be especially mindful of the clothing you wear to prevent accidental pulling on your PIV catheter.
- Pay attention to your PIV catheter and watch for any problems. If there are any unusual or unexpected changes of any kind, please contact your Amber Specialty Pharmacy pharmacist or a member of your health care team. Watch for cracks, leaks or any kind of damage. If your dressing becomes loose, wet or dirty, call your health care team.

## PROTECTING YOUR ARM

The arm where your PIV catheter is inserted will need extra attention throughout your day. There is potential for blood clots to develop in this arm. To help prevent this problem, follow your doctor's instructions and remember these tips:

- Use your arm normally throughout the day when possible. Limited movement can lead to blood clots, so it is very important to move your arm. Your doctor may suggest light arm exercises.
- Do not overuse your arm. Avoid excessive arm movement, especially in certain athletic activities.
- Do not use your affected arm to lift heavy objects. Follow the weight limit guidelines provided by your health care team.
- Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated.
- If you experience pain in your arm during activity, stop the activity and contact a member of your health care team.

Talk with your doctor or a member of your health care team if you have any questions regarding specific activities.

## GOOD HYGIENE & PROPER HAND-WASHING TIPS

To prevent infection, it is important that you and your caregiver keep your PIV catheter clean. This starts with good hygiene and proper hand-washing. Washing your hands with soap and water is essential to your care. If your PIV catheter is in a vein in your hand, take special care to keep your dressing dry. Do not get it wet. Remember, never touch the catheter 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 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
- 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

### Contact Us

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