Care of Your IV Site
Going home with an intravenous catheter

This handout explains self-care at home when you have an intravenous (IV) catheter.

What is an IV catheter?
IV stands for intravenous, which means “into a vein.” A catheter is a thin, flexible tube. An IV catheter has been inserted into your vein to help us easily give you medicines or fluids.

Because you will be returning to the hospital for treatment 2 or more days in a row, you will be going home with the catheter in place. Leaving this catheter in place means you will not need to have a new one placed for your treatment visits.

How do I care for the IV?

Keep Your IV Site Dry
• Do not immerse the IV site in water. This means do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming while you have the IV.
• If possible, do not shower while you have the IV. If you choose to shower, cover the site with the Aquaguard we gave you, or a plastic bag.

When to Check the Site
Remove the bandage dressing (but not the adhesive dressing) and check your IV site if you:
• Feel tenderness, warmth, or swelling at the site
• Have a fever higher than 100°F (37.8°C)

We will want to know what the site looks like, and if you see any redness or drainage. After you check the site:
• Call 206.744.8088 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.744.2500.
• If you are a Gamma Knife patient, call 206.744.8067 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**If the IV Comes Out**

• Apply firm pressure over the site for at least 5 minutes, or until the bleeding stops.

• Place a Band-Aid on the site after the bleeding has stopped.

### If You Were Told to Flush the IV Catheter

Some catheters must flushed every 12 hours with *sterile saline* (germ-free salt water). If you were told to flush your IV catheter, use **only** the sterile saline syringe and green Curos caps we gave you.

To flush your catheter:

• Gather your supplies.

• Wash your hands well and dry them with a clean towel.

• Remove the green Curos cap from the IV port. Throw the used cap into the trash.

• Let the port air dry. This should take about 30 seconds.

• Open the package that holds the saline syringe. Carefully remove the cap at the tip of the syringe. Connect it to the dry port. **Do not touch the tip of the syringe or the port connection site.**

• Take the clamp off the IV tube.

• Gently inject the contents of the syringe into the IV tube. If doing this causes pain or you meet resistance, **stop** and call one of the numbers in the Questions box on this page.

• You may have a cool feeling and an unusual taste in your mouth as the saline is injected. This is normal, but should not be painful.

• Check the tubing to be sure it is clear and does not appear pink or red. If it is dark red, call one of the numbers in the Questions box.

• Put the clamp back on the IV tubing.

• Disconnect the syringe. Throw the used syringe into the trash.

• Place a clean Curos cap on the IV port.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Ambulatory Procedure Area: Weekdays from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., call 206.744.8088.

Gamma Knife: Weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call 206.744.9067.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.744.2500.

### When do I call the clinic?

Call one of the numbers in the “Questions” box on this page if you have pain, redness, swelling, or tenderness at the IV site.