



After Your Tunneled Catheter Is Placed

Self-care at home

This handout gives instructions to follow after you have had a tunneled catheter placed.

Activity

The sedation you are given for this procedure will take up to 24 hours to wear off. Even if you feel normal, your reflexes and judgment are not as strong as they usually are.

- **For 24 hours after your procedure, do NOT:**
 - Drive
 - Use machinery
 - Drink alcohol
 - Take tranquilizers or sleeping pills
 - Make important personal decisions
 - Sign legal documents
 - Be responsible for taking care of another person
- Keep your head up for 2 hours (do not lie down flat).
- Relax at home for the rest of the day after your catheter is placed. Have a family member or friend there with you.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 5 to 10 pounds for 3 days.
- Do not get the dressing wet until you have had your first dressing change and teaching session.
- If you must shower or bathe before your teaching session with your nurse, cover your bandages and connections with plastic wrap or Aquaguard and tape the edges to keep them dry. Try not to stand directly in the shower spray.

Eating

- If you can drink fluids without any problems, drink extra amounts for the rest of the day unless otherwise instructed by your provider.
- You may resume your regular diet if you can drink fluids without any problems.

Medicines

- You can resume taking your usual medicines as soon as you begin to eat again, unless otherwise instructed by your provider.
- If you have questions about your medicines, please ask your clinic health care provider.
- If your health care provider has instructed you to, you may take pain medicines as prescribed. Or, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) if your provider tells you it is OK.

Self-care

You will have some bruising, swelling, and tenderness in your chest, neck, and shoulder. These symptoms should lessen over the next 5 days. Using your arm on the side the catheter was placed may ease your symptoms.

Applying an ice pack on your chest may also help with pain and swelling. Wrap the ice pack in a clean cloth or towel. Do not put the ice pack directly on your skin.

When to Call

Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- Pain that is not controlled by your usual pain medicines or acetaminophen, when taken as directed
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Painful breathing or shortness of breath
- Changes at your catheter site:
 - Increased bleeding
 - Redness
 - Tenderness
 - Swelling
- Severe neck pain or discomfort
- Fever higher than 100.9°F (38.3°C) or chills

Caring for Your Catheter

- Make sure the clamps are closed at all times when the catheter is not in use.
- Keep the clamps on the thick reinforced area of the catheter.
- If your dressing falls off or becomes saturated, cover it with gauze and tape and contact us.
- You will have a dressing change and teaching session with a clinic nurse, Home Infusion, or the Dialysis Center 1 to 3 days after your catheter is placed. If this session is not scheduled, call your clinic health care provider to schedule it.
- Do not use safety pins or scissors near your line.
- **If your line leaks, gets cut or breaks, clamp the line close to your chest.** Then, call your clinic health care provider right away.
- Never take the blue Clave connector off your line. If it falls off:
 - Make sure your catheter is clamped.
 - Then scrub the catheter connection with an alcohol wipe and place a new Clave connector.
 - Then, call your clinic health care provider.
- Keep your dressing supplies dry. Store them away from the bathroom and kitchen sinks.
- For patients who have a tunneled catheter who are **not** on dialysis:
 - **Keep your bulldog clamp with you at all times.** The bulldog clamp is a safety clamp.
 - Use the plastic tape with tabs and a bulldog clamp to secure the line close to your chest (on your clothing or a necklace). **Never let it hang loose.**
 - Place tape between the clamp and the blue Clave connector on the catheter. **Do not put tape over the connection between the catheter and Clave.**

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Clinic staff are also available to help.

Who to Call

University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) Patients

Interventional Radiology nurse coordinator..... 206-598-6897
Procedure Scheduling..... 206-598-6209
After hours (between 5 p.m. to 7 a.m.), and on weekends and holidays
Ask for the Interventional Radiology Fellow on call 206-598-6190

Harborview Medical Center (HMC) Patients

Patient Care Coordinators 206-744-0112 or 206-744-0113
After hours (between 5 p.m. to 7 a.m.), and on weekends and holidays
Ask for the Interventional Radiology Fellow on call 206-744-0147

If You Have an Emergency

Go directly to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1. Do not wait to contact one of our staff.

UW Medicine



Patient Care Services

1959 N.E. Pacific St. Seattle, WA 98195