

Central Line Care

During your hospital stay

This handout explains how we care for your central line while you are in the hospital, and how you can help.

What is a central line?

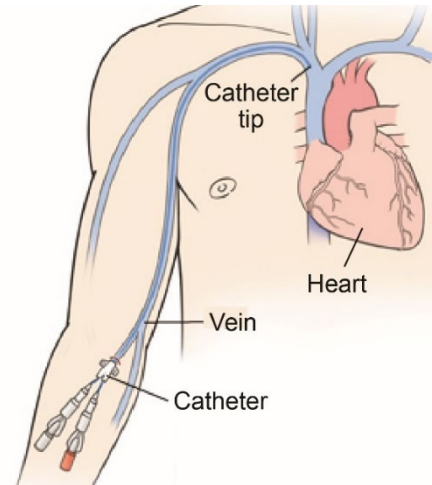
A *central line* is a tube (*catheter*) that providers place in a large vein in your neck, chest, groin, or arm. It is also called a *central venous catheter*.

Why do I have a central line?

A central line is an important part of your treatment plan. It lets us give you fluids, medication, and treatments.

Does it need special care?

Central lines need special care to avoid problems like infections and complications. These can be dangerous and sometimes cause death.



How You Can Help

- **Wash your hands often.** Clean hands help lower the risk of many types of infections.
- It's ok to ask your nurses and doctors to wash their hands before touching your line if you didn't see them clean their hands.
- Every day your nursing team will help you bathe with chlorhexidine wipes or soap. This treatment is the best way to decrease germs on your skin.
- Tell your nurse if you notice that the *dressing* (bandage) is dirty, wet, or peeling away from your skin.
- Avoid touching your line or letting anyone except your nurses or doctors touch your line.
- Do not let your line or tubing touch the ground or other surfaces that may be dirty like a sink or toilet.

What We Do

- We place a special disinfecting cap on each *port* (outlet) that is not being used.
- We change your dressing on a schedule. We also change it if it is dirty, wet, or not protecting the line well.
- We limit how many times we access your line and do our best to disconnect it only when needed.
- We will check the line every day to make sure it can be taken out as soon as possible.
- We will secure the line to prevent it from being pulled out.
- There may be other tasks we do for you depending on the type of line you have or your diagnosis.

If we believe your line is unsafe for any reason, we will take steps to fix it. We want to do all we can to protect you against infection. Please talk with your care team if you have any questions.

