

Implanted Port: Care During Your Hospital Stay

General Information

You have an implanted port (known as a port) under your skin in your chest (see picture at right).

The port is often used for drawing blood and giving treatments such as intravenous (IV) medicines, fluids, nutrition or blood transfusions. Not all lab tests are drawn through the port.

Your port should only be accessed for this reason:

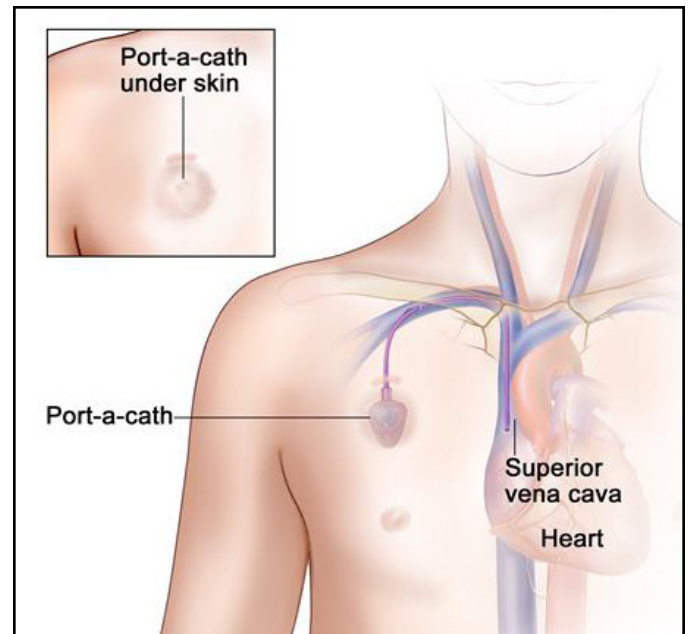
Port Care

The port care is done to prevent an infection. Your bedside nurse and a nurse from the IV team will care for your port while you are in the hospital.

If you came to the hospital with a port already accessed with a needle, the nurse may need to change the needle for use during your hospital stay.

■ Port care

- The nurse will check to make sure:
 - the dressing is secure to your skin so bacteria (germs) cannot collect where the catheter enters your skin
 - a Biopatch® (antimicrobial disc) is placed where the catheter enters your skin
 - there is no blood in the cap at the end of the catheter



National Institutes of Health

A port is inserted under your skin in your chest.

- the injection cap is screwed tightly to the end of the catheter that is connected to the needle.
- **Other care**
 - It is not recommended that you take a shower while you have the port accessed with a needle. Water is not sterile and will increase your chance of getting the dressing wet. This can lead to an infection.
 - The needle in your port may be removed several days before you leave the hospital if your treatment is done.

(over)

- Your nurse will regularly flush your port while it is accessed with a needle.
- The solution used to cleanse your skin and the antimicrobial disc that goes under dressing both contain chlorhexidine gluconate. An allergic reaction is rare and it can be an emergency.
 - Your nurse will ask you if you have a known allergy, skin irritation or reaction to chlorhexidine skin wash or mouth wash.
 - If you have any skin irritation, difficulty breathing or other symptoms, use your call light and ask for help.

How Can You Help Prevent a Port Infection?

- If you do not see the members of your health care team clean their hands, ask them to do so.
- If you do not see the members of your health care team scrub the cap at end of your catheter, ask them to do so.
- You will be asked to wear a mask and turn your head away from the port site during dressing changes.
- Tell your nurse right away if your dressing comes off, or if it becomes wet, bloody or dirty.
- Tell your nurse if you have any redness, warmth, increased drainage or pain at the port site.
- Ask your doctor or nurse every day how long you will need the port accessed with a needle. (The sooner it is removed, the less likely the chance of infection.)