

Interventional radiology

Port-a-Cath discharge information

Information for patients

Introduction

This leaflet has been provided to help answer some of the questions you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the consultation between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what you discussed together.

What should I expect after the Port-a-Cath insertion?

You may experience some mild swelling or bruising, or both, around the incision. It may take several days to get better.

You can take over-the-counter pain medication if needed (for example, paracetamol or ibuprofen). You can take your normal medications unless you are told otherwise.

You may feel a small bump under the skin that is the site of the port.

You should ensure that you have a responsible adult to take you home after your port insertion. We advise you not to drive immediately after the procedure.

Effective handwashing is important to reduce the risk of infection and should be applied when accessing the port.

When can I use the Port-a-Cath?

You need to wait 7 days after insertion before using a Port-a-Cath. This is because post-operative swelling can make it more difficult to access the port.

However, you must wait 4 weeks after insertion before using a double lumen Port-a-Cath (Vortex port) that has been placed for apheresis.

In some cases, the Port-a-Cath may be used immediately for IV antibiotics, chemotherapy or any other long-term medication. However, a special Port-a-Cath access needle (huber needle) must be in place.

Your port will need flushing once every three months when not in use. Your clinical team will arrange this. If you come in for treatment more often, it will be flushed during these times.

When can I have a shower?

- you can take a short shower after 48 hours. **Please try to keep the dressings dry**
- if small white strips (steri-strips) have been used to close the wound, they will be covered with a waterproof dressing. The dressing can be removed after 5 days
- if **skin glue** has been used to close the wound instead of steri-strips, you can remove the dressing after 48 hours
- do not apply any cream, lotions or ointment to the skin near the wound as it could loosen the steri-strips or glue before the area heals
- any glue will flake out over the next 2 to 3 weeks
- if a special access needle (**huber needle**) is in place we recommend you do not shower until the needle is removed. The dressing must be kept clean and dry

Should I limit my activities with a Port-a-Cath?

- avoid strenuous exercises or activities during the first ten days
- avoid bathing, swimming, and visits to the sauna until the wound is healed
- protect your wound from pressure or friction, so avoid tight clothing
- you can wear a seatbelt and you can drive your car unless told otherwise by your doctor

Possible problems with an implantable port

Infection may develop inside the catheter or around the port.

You should seek medical attention if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- increasing redness, tenderness or swelling, or both, at the insertion site
- shortness of breath
- fever over 38 degrees Celsius
- arm or neck swelling

If any infection is suspected, you may be given antibiotics, or the line may need to be removed.

Who can I contact for further information and support?

If you have questions or concerns about your Port-a-Cath line, please call the 24-hour oncology health line on **020 3311 5160**

Haematology apheresis helpline on **020 3311 7788**

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

Imaging department
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