

# INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR INTRAVENOUS CANNULA

## Patient Information Leaflet

**Your Health. Our Priority.**

## Introduction

You have been prescribed treatment that requires an intravenous cannula to be inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. This will be done by a qualified doctor or nurse who will explain the procedure to you before they start.

The following information will help you understand the care and attention you and your cannula require.

## What is a Cannula?

A cannula is a small flexible tube that is inserted into a vein and secured with a dressing so that medication or fluids can be given directly into the bloodstream.

## What does it look like?



## Is it painful?

You may feel a small amount of pain or discomfort at the time the cannula is inserted. This is like a pin prick and will pass very shortly after insertion. You may also feel a cold sensation as the fluid is commenced again this sensation will pass very quickly.

## **Why is a dressing applied over the cannula?**

It is very important that the area where the cannula enters your skin is kept clean. It is also necessary to secure the cannula with a dressing so that it does not move or fall out of place.

## **Can I get it wet?**

It is important that the cannula stays dry, for this reason the dressing is waterproof when splashed with water. However, if you have a shower or bath, you will need to protect the dressing and avoid submerging it in water. If the dressing starts to peel off please inform your nurse immediately.

## **What if the dressing looks dirty?**

It is important to keep the site of the cannula clean. If the dressing appears dirty please inform your nurse immediately.

## **How long will the cannula be in for?**

A cannula is usually taken out after your treatment has ended, or if your treatment is continuing it is replaced at intervals of 72 - 96 hours. Only in exceptional circumstances will it be left in place beyond this time. The date the cannula was inserted will be written on the dressing so that the medical and nursing team can see when it is due to be replaced. If you are no longer prescribed treatment requiring a cannula it will be removed. If you are due to be discharged from hospital and your cannula has not been removed, please inform your nurse immediately.

If your treatment is likely to extend beyond a week, or for a number of weeks, then you may be referred to the IV Therapy Practitioner for a Midline or PICC. If this is the case the IV Therapy Practitioner will visit you and explain what this is.

## **What is the coloured cap for?**

This is the 'Injection Port' which may be used by the doctor or nurse to administer your medicine. Cleanliness is important so this port must remain closed at all times. Please do not open it. It is also important to be careful when getting dressed and going to the toilet as it can be bumped or knocked. Please inform your nurse if you notice that the port is open.

You may have a small tube attached to your cannula, and if this is the case then your medicine will be administered via the port at the end of this extension set instead of through the coloured cap.

## **How do I look after my cannula?**

Your cannula will be looked after by the nurses and doctors on the ward. The nurses and doctors will wear gloves at all times when dealing with your cannula. It would help however if you notice any of the following;

Inform your nurse immediately if:

- You feel pain in the hand or arm that your cannula is in
- You feel the area around the cannula is very hot
- You see redness or a change in colour or swelling around the cannula
- You see bleeding or leakage where the cannula is inserted into your skin
- Your fluid bag/bottle is empty
- You notice a small amount of blood in the tubing attached to your drip
- Your dressing is loose or comes off altogether
- Your dressing is wet
- Your dressing is dirty

All of the above are not life threatening and should not cause you concern.

## **Contact us**

Please report any concerns to either the nurse in charge on the ward or you can ask to see the IV Therapy Practitioner. If you request to see the IV Therapy Practitioner please bear in mind this may not be on the same day.

**If you would like this leaflet in a different format, for example, in large print, or on audiotape, or for people with learning disabilities, please contact:**

Patient and Customer Services, Poplar Suite, Stepping Hill Hospital. Tel: 0161 419 5678.  
Email: [PCS@stockport.nhs.uk](mailto:PCS@stockport.nhs.uk).

A free interpreting service is available, if you need help with this booklet/ leaflet. Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000.  
Email: [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)

如果你需要他人為你解釋這小冊子/單張的內容，我們可以提供免費的傳譯服務，請致電 0161 477 9000 史托波特傳譯部。

W przypadku gdybyś potrzebował pomocy odnośnie tej broszurki/ulotki, dostępne są usługi tłumaczeniowe. Prosimy dzwonić do Interpreting Unit pod numer 0161 477 9000.

যদি এই পুস্তিকা/প্রচার পত্রটি সম্পর্কে আপনার কোন সাহায্য দরকার হয় তবে বিনা খরচে আপনার জন্য দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা করা হতে পারে। মেহেরবানী করে স্টকপোর্ট ইন্টারপ্রিটিং ইউনিটে ফোন করুন টেলিফোন নম্বর, 0161 477 9000.

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### **Our smoke free policy**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere on our sites. Please read our leaflet 'Policy on Smoke Free NHS Premises' to find out more.

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