Instructions for Central Venous Catheter (CVC) Care

Patient Education

A CVC is a soft flexible tube inserted into your chest when you have a long term need for frequent intravenous (into a vein) treatments. The catheter exits from the skin as one flexible tube that then divides into two (Figure 1).

General Instructions for CVC Care

1. Wash your hands before handling your catheter
2. Proper hand washing
   - Remove jewelry
   - Wash the front and backs of your hands with soap and warm water—vigorously scrub
   - Clean under your fingernails and between your fingers
   - Rinse and dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towels
   - Now avoid touching your hair, face, clothing. If you do, wash your hands again.
3. Never use sharp instruments or scissors near the catheter
4. Always keep a valve on both ends of the catheter
5. Gather all supplies before you start
6. Only use clamps that come with the catheter. Other types of clamps may damage the catheter.
### Catheter Dressing Change: Weekly

<table>
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<th>Step</th>
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<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Clean the work surface area you will be using with soap and water or rubbing alcohol and allow to dry. Do not use tiled or wooden surfaces, which absorbs liquids.</td>
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| Step 2 | Gather your supplies:  
3 alcohol swabs  
1 chlorhexidine swab  
1 Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier™  
1 transparent dressing with CHG gelpad  
1 roll of tape  
| Step 3 | Wash hands |
| Step 4 | Open the packages and place the items on your work surface. Try to avoid touching the contents of the packages. |
| Step 4 | Gently peel the dressing back toward insertion site. Keep the removal low and slow, peeling the dressing back onto itself. To prevent the gelpad from separating from the film, place the thumb or forefinger on center of the dressing gelpad while removing. Always stabilize the catheter while removing so the catheter is not pulled. |
|       | To facilitate removal under atypical conditions including: adhesions to sutures or the catheter itself, moisture may be beneficial. Swab or wipe the area underneath the gel pad with a new alcohol wipe or squeeze a drop of alcohol from the wipe onto the area of adhesion. Continue removal process. |
|       | Throw the old dressing away. Exam the catheter site for redness, swelling, or drainage. If you see these signs, call the medical team. |
| Step 5 | Wash hands |
| Step 6 | Use one alcohol swab and clean around the catheter exit site in a circular motion. Start at the catheter and move outward about 5 inches (Figure 2). Lift the catheter to clean under the tubing. Repeat with a second alcohol swab.  
Use the last alcohol swab to clean along the catheter. Begin at the exit site and along the catheter away from your skin, only once. Do not pull on the catheter.  
Use the chlorhexidine swab to cleanse around the catheter exit site as you did the alcohol swabs. Start at the center of the site and cleanse using a back and forth motion as you move outward for 5 inches (Figure 2). Perform for 30 seconds creating friction with the back and forth motion. Allow the area to dry completely. May take 2-3 minutes. Do not blow on the area. |
| Step 7 | Apply the Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier to skin around the exit site beginning 2cm away from the exit site and extending to the area to be covered by the adhesive portion of the transparent dressing. Allow to dry completely (until it looks “paper dry”). |
| Step 8 | Peel the liner from the dressing. Do not stretch the dressing when applying to skin. With adhesive side of dressing facing the skin, center the CHG gel pad over the catheter insertion site and smooth down the dressing edges. Remove precut paper tape strips from the frame and use to further secure the hub or the catheter.  
Tape can be used to secure the catheter (Figure3). Do not place tape over the transparent portion of the dressing. |
# Flushing the Catheter

Each side of the catheter is flushed daily with heparin. Heparin is used to stop a clot from forming on the end of the catheter.

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| Step 2 | Gather supplies:  
- 2 (3cc) syringes. One for each side of the catheter  
- 1 vial of heparin. The concentration is 100 units/cc.  
- 3-4 alcohol wipes. One for each catheter tube, one for the heparin vial and one for the mini-spike pin.  
- 1 mini-spike pin used for each new vial of heparin |
| Step 3 | Wash hands |
| Step 4 | Open the supplies without touching the contents of the packages. Leave items in the package on your work surface. |
| Step 5 | Draw the heparin from the vial into the syringes.  
a. Take the top off the heparin vial and clean the rubber stopper with an alcohol wipe. Scrub hard with the alcohol wipe.  
b. Open the mini-spike pin package. Remove the clear cover and insert this spike into the rubber stopper of the heparin vial. Remove the remaining cover off the top of the mini-spike. Attach a syringe to the mini-spike.  
c. Turn the vial upside down and pull back the syringe plunger until 3 cc's of heparin is in the syringe.  
d. Remove the syringe from the mini-spike pin. Look carefully for air bubbles in the syringe. Remove air bubbles by pointing the syringe toward the ceiling. Gently tap the syringe with your hand. The air bubbles will rise to the top.  
e. Place the open end of the syringe into the syringe cover. Do NOT touch the open end of the syringe. When in doubt, simply start all over. |
| Step 6 |Flush the catheter.  
a. Clean the valve(s) on the catheter with an alcohol wipe. Rub hard.  
b. Attach a syringe filled with heparin to the valve of the catheter.  
c. Open the clamp on the side of the catheter you are going to flush  
d. Slowly push the heparin into the catheter until all the fluid is out of the syringe.  
e. Remove the syringe.  
f. Clamp the catheter AFTER the syringe is removed.  
g. Repeat on the other side of the catheter.  
h. Used syringes can be disposed of in your household garbage. |
Problems Solving Tips for the Catheter

If you there is resistance when flushing the catheter:
- DO NOT USE FORCE
- Double check that the catheter is unclamped.
- IF the catheter is not clamped and there is resistance to flushing, call the medical team.

How do you bathe with a catheter?
- It is important to keep your catheter dry.
- After you shower, gently pat dry the dressing and wipe the catheter dry.
- A second option is to place the catheter ends into a zip lock bag and close the bag around the catheter. Turn the zip lock bag upside down and tape the zip lock bag over the dressing. After your shower, remove the tape and then the zip lock bag. Plastic catheter covers may be purchased.
- DO NOT soak in a bathtub, hot tub or submerge your catheter under water.

Where to Get Catheter Supplies?
- Before the catheter is placed, you will get a kit containing the needed supplies and prescription for heparin from your nurse coordinator.
- If you need additional supplies contact your nurse coordinator.
- Plan ahead so you don’t run out of supplies.

When to call the Medical Team?
- The catheter is pulled or falls out.
- You get a fever.
- There is tenderness, warmth, redness, swelling, or drainage at the catheter exit site.
- Swelling in your arms, hands, or neck.
- New onset of shortness of breath.
The catheter breaks.

What To Do if the Catheter Breaks?

- Clamp the catheter above the break.
- If the catheter clamps are broken, use the clamp that is provided in your kit.
- Call the medical team or go straight to the nearest emergency department. The catheter must be assessed to see if it can be repaired immediately.