

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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Peripheral Intravenous (IV) Cannula

Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Your consultant has decided that the best way for you to receive your treatment is through a peripheral intravenous (IV) cannula.

What is a peripheral IV cannula?

A peripheral IV cannula is a small plastic tube that is inserted through the skin into one of the small veins in your hand or arm. They are used to give many different types of medications, for example antibiotics.

How are cannula put in?

The cannula will be put in either in hospital, at an outpatient clinic or at home by a specially trained nurse or doctor. It is put into the vein using a fine needle, which is then removed. You may feel some discomfort as the needle goes in, but this should stop once the cannula is in place. A dressing is then put on and a small amount of fluid is then put through the cannula to check it is correctly located.

An IV cannula may stay in place for as long as there is no redness or pain around it. However, your nurse will assess the area around the cannula daily and may replace it earlier if they feel it is necessary.

Who to contact

If at any time you are worried about your IV cannula, you should not hesitate to contact the nurse or department where you are receiving your treatment. They are happy to discuss your concerns and, if necessary, check your IV cannula.

IV Therapy/OPAT Team:

7 Days a week 8.30am-4.30pm Tel: 01296 315485
or 07810 181 584

Bank Holidays: 9.00am-4.30pm (on call basis)
Tel: 07810 181584

Cancer Care and Haematology Unit, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:

Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm Tel: 01296 315120

Sunrise Cancer Unit, Wycombe Hospital:

Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm Tel: 01494 426238

Accident and Emergency, Stoke Mandeville Hospital

Tel: 01296 315664

Medical Day Unit, Wycombe Hospital:

Tel: 01494 426318

Ambulatory + Emergency Care Unit, Stoke Mandeville

Tel: 01296 418175

Possible risks and complications

Every procedure carries some risks and complications. This is a very simple, safe procedure with very little risk of complications.

However, if you experience any of the following, you should let your nurse or doctor know as soon as possible:

- Continued pain where the cannula is located.
- Pain or discomfort when your medication is given through the cannula
- Burning sensation, swelling or redness around the site of the cannula
- You have a raised temperature, feel feverish or shaky.

Never attempt to put anything into your cannula unless you have been specially trained to do so by the department looking after your treatment.

Looking after your IV cannula

Once in place, it is important that you understand how to take care of your cannula to prevent it coming out or becoming infected.

- **Keep the dressing clean and dry:** If the dressing starts to come away from the skin, try and secure it with tape until a new dressing can be applied.
- **Protect it from knocks:** Wear jewellery and watches on the opposite hand to prevent them catching the cannula. Ensure the protective bandage stays in place.
- **Wear loose clothing:** Try to wear loose sleeves to make it easier to dress and undress, as cannulas can get caught on clothing.
- Avoid bending the wrist or elbow joint too much where the cannula may be in place.

What to do if the cannula comes out

The cannula will be bandaged to help prevent it coming out. However, if it does, do not panic. You will be given an emergency kit (gauze and tape) to keep at home. Elevate your hand / arm & place the gauze over the site where the cannula came out until any bleeding stops then put some tape on the gauze. Contact / leave a message with the department to let them know.

Baths and showers

You should avoid getting the cannula wet. When taking a bath or shower you should wrap Clingfilm around the cannula. Do not soak your arm underwater, and always dab the dressing dry if it becomes wet.

You should **never go** swimming with a cannula in place.

How is the IV cannula removed?

Your cannula will be changed at regular intervals, and removed when your treatment is complete. This is a painless procedure whereby the nurse will remove the plastic tubing from your hand or arm, and place a small dressing over the area where it was inserted. This should remain in place for 2 hours.