

Venous Port Insertion (Port-a-Cath Insertion)

Your doctor has asked you to attend our clinic for a venous port to be inserted. We have designed this brochure to help you prepare for your procedure. A Port-a-Cath is a medical device inserted beneath the skin and connected into a vein by a thin tube (catheter). The port is a hollow chamber about the size of your thumb tip and is usually placed in the upper chest region. The port can be accessed many times with minimal discomfort allowing for the administration of intravenous drugs and the drawing of blood samples. The device can stay in for many months and can be removed when no longer required.

Preparation

- You will be given instructions by our booking staff regarding the time of your appointment and any necessary preparation.
- You will be admitted to day surgery if you are an outpatient.
- Please shower on the morning of your procedure before coming to the hospital.
- You are required to fast for 4 hours prior to this procedure.
- You should take your normal medications with a sip of water.
- You need to notify us and your referring doctor if you are on blood thinning medications or injections (eg aspirin, warfarin, coumadin, Plavix or Clexane etc.) or if you are taking fish oil or krill oil as these also increase the risk of bleeding. These medications may need to be stopped several days before your procedure.
- We will have checked your recent blood count but feel free to notify us if you know that your blood count will be low.
- You will be changed into a hospital gown and an intravenous line will be inserted. Intravenous antibiotics are usually given just prior to insertion of the venous port to minimise the risk of infection.

Procedure

- You will be taken from day surgery to the radiology department and asked to lie on an x-ray bed.
- You may be given intravenous sedation which will make you calm and relaxed during the procedure.
- A specialist Radiologist performs the procedure assisted by nursing and technical staff. The insertion site is made numb with local anaesthetic.
- An ultrasound machine is used to allow ready access to the vein and the x-ray machine is used to make sure the catheter is positioned appropriately.
- The port is placed under the skin in the upper chest region through a small incision which is then closed with stitches under the skin. The catheter runs up under the skin to the vein which is usually just above the collar bone. At this site there is a small incision with one stitch in it.

Post procedure

- You will initially be observed in the radiology department and then returned to day surgery. You need to rest in bed for around 2 hours after the procedure to minimise the risk of bleeding or bruising at the insertion site. You can eat and drink during this time.
- You will then need someone to drive you home where you should relax until the following day. Sporting and other strenuous activity should be avoided for at least 2 weeks after the procedure to allow the area to recover. Your particular circumstances can be discussed with the radiology staff at the time of your procedure.
- Panadol or Panadeine should help with any pain once the local anaesthetic wears off. If you feel that you need stronger pain relief, contact your referring doctor or GP.
- The dressing should remain clean and dry until you have your first appointment with the Oncology clinic.

If you experience bleeding or excessive bruising/swelling, redness or other evidence of infection please contact our clinic nurses between 8.00am and 6.00pm. Outside these hours please contact your local emergency centre or referring doctor.