
I have an infusaport – what do I need to know?

The size of needle used for my port is:

What can I do to help prevent infections and protect my port?

- Wear loose clothing on treatment days, to allow for easy access to the port site, such as button up shirts or blouses.
- Avoid touching the port area unnecessarily
- Maintain good hygiene habits – wash the skin surrounding your port gently but well when the needle is not in place.
- Alert your nurse or doctor if you notice any changes to the port or to your chest, arm, shoulder or neck on the side of your port, such as redness, pain, swelling, fluid leaking or heat.
- Seatbelts can rub against the port area causing discomfort – using a soft seatbelt wrap (i.e. Sheepskin) can help alleviate this pressure.
- Use a waterproof dressing or shower cover (supplied by nursing staff) when the port has a needle in it. If the site becomes wet or the dressing is peeling, please contact doctor or nurse.
- For women – be mindful about bra straps, which could rub and cause irritation to the area surrounding your port.
- For men - keep the port area free from hair by shaving the site on a regular basis if required.

When the needle is not in your port you can exercise, swim, and shower as normal.

Port care

Port care

You can use a cream to the skin over the port site (supplied nursing staff) to numb the site prior to needle being placed in the port. Please apply 60 minutes prior to needling procedure. This numbing effect can last up to 2 hours.

Nursing staff confirm that the port is working effectively by drawing back blood from the needled port and flushing the needled port with saline. If there are any concerns, the nursing staff will liaise with your treating team to discuss if any investigations are required.

The needle used for ports can only be in place for 7 days. At this time, nursing staff are required to change the needle and dressing to prevent infection.

A port under your skin can stay in place for years. When your port is not in use, maintenance port flushing is required every 3 months. Please speak to our reception or nursing staff to help schedule this.

Going to the Airport?

You will need to tell security about your port before screening and let them know where it is located. Some security systems may detect your port which may mean you have to go through additional screening.

If screening involves a pat-down, be sure to tell security staff if touching the port could cause pain or discomfort. Show your device identification card (provided to you post operatively) or a supporting letter from your treating team to confirm you have a device in place.

Things to look out for

If you have one or more of the following, contact you doctor or nurse:

- A temperature of 38 degrees or higher
- The needle comes out of your port
- The dressing over the port needle is peeling back, wet or exposed to air
- If your skin is itchy, sore or leaking fluid at the port site.
- If you have redness, heat, or pain and swelling to your arm, chest, shoulder or neck near where your port lies.

Who should I call if I am worried about my port?

Monday – Friday during office hours:

1. Contact your Doctor
2. Contact the Ivy Suite: 6465 9211

Monday – Friday after 5pm, public holidays and weekends:

1. After hours Oncology Triage service: 6465 2819

References

eviQ. (2021). Portacath (Totally implantable venous access device/TIVAD). Cancer Institute NSW, NSW Government. Retrieved from 507-Portacath (Totally implantable venous access device TIVAD) | eviQ

Cancer Nurses Society Australia. (2021). Vascular access device: evidence based clinical practice guidelines. Retrieved from Vascular Access Guidelines - CNSA - Cancer Nurses Society of Australia

