

Having an IV cannula

Infection Prevention

Information for Patients & Carers

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What is an IV cannula?

An Intravenous (IV) cannula is a small plastic hollow tube which is inserted into one of the small veins in your hand or arm. Intravenous simply means 'in the vein'.

It is inserted through the skin and is used to give you medication (such as antibiotics) or fluids when you are unable to take by mouth or that need to enter your blood stream directly.

Why do I need a cannula?

- You may have been prescribed medication, fluids or blood products which need to be given directly into your blood stream (intravenously).
- Short term - medications for diagnostic tests where a dye or other substance needs to be given intravenously or you need an anesthetic.
- Long term - you may need several days of intravenous medications e.g. antibiotics for an infection.

How is a cannula put in?

The cannula will be put in either during your hospital stay/ visit or at an outpatient clinic by trained healthcare staff. It is put into your vein using a fine sharp needle, which is then taken out and disposed of safely. You may feel some discomfort as the needle goes in, but this should stop once the cannula is in place. A dressing is then placed over the cannula to keep it secure and prevent infections. A small amount of fluid is put through the cannula to check it has been correctly placed in the vein.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What care is taken when my cannula is inserted?

To reduce the risk of infection staff will clean their hands before inserting your cannula. They will also wear gloves and an apron. Your skin around the area will be cleaned.

The packaging is opened just before use. A note will be made in your records of the date and time when your cannula was inserted.

If you do not see staff cleaning their hands before inserting your cannula, do not be afraid to ask if they have.

How long will my cannula stay in place?

- You will need an IV cannula for the duration of your intravenous medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- Your cannula may need to stay in place for up to 5 days or longer as assessed by trained healthcare staff, as long as there is no redness or pain around it.
- You may need to have more than 1 cannula during treatment, if different products need to be given.
- During your stay your nurse will assess the area around the cannula twice every day when you receive your treatment. They may replace the cannula earlier than usual, if needed.

Possible risks and complications

Every procedure carries possibility of some risks and complications. This is a very simple and safe procedure, with very little risk of complications. However, please let your nurse or doctor know as soon as possible if you have:

- continued pain where the cannula goes into your skin.
- pain or discomfort when your medication is given through the cannula.
- a burning sensation, swelling or redness around the site of the cannula.
- a raised temperature, feel feverish or shaky.

Looking after your IV cannula

It is important that you understand how to take care of your cannula so that it doesn't come out or become infected:

- **Keep the dressing clean and dry** - if the dressing starts to come away from the skin, inform your nurse. If at home, try and secure it with tape until the dressing can be changed.
- **Protect it from knocks** - swap any jewellery and watches to the opposite hand to prevent them catching on the cannula.

- **Wear loose clothing** - try to wear loose sleeves to make it easier to dress and undress. The cannula can get caught on clothing which can cause the cannula to move out of place.
- **Avoid bending the wrist or elbow joint too much** where the cannula may be in place, as it may dislodge the cannula.
- **Never put anything into your cannula** unless you have been specially trained to administer your own medication.

Can I have a shower/ bath?

Yes, it is ok to have a shower or bath, but avoid getting the cannula dressing wet:

- When taking a shower/ bath in hospital, your nurse will assist you to keep it dry.
- Do not soak your arm underwater, and always dab the dressing dry if it becomes wet.
- If you are sent home with a cannula, you should wrap cling film around it when taking a shower or bath to keep it dry.
- You should never go swimming with a cannula in place.

What if the cannula comes out?

The cannula is fragile and movement can make the hollow plastic tube come out. Do not panic if it does come out. If you are staying in hospital tell your nurse if it comes out.

If you are sent home with a cannula for treatment, follow these instructions if it comes out:

- Immediately stop the bleeding.
- Apply firm pressure over the site using a clean dry tissue or cloth for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the bleeding has stopped.
- Remove the dressing if still in place.
- Cover the site with a plaster and keep in place for 2 hours.
- Contact the department looking after your treatment.

How is the IV cannula removed?

Your cannula will be changed at regular intervals. It will be taken out when your treatment is complete. If you are being discharged please make sure you do not go home with the cannula in place, unless you will be having intravenous medication at home through community service staff.

Removing a cannula is a painless procedure. A nurse will remove the plastic tubing from your hand or arm and put a small dressing over the area. Keep the dressing in place for 2 hours.

Preventing the spread of infection at Leicester's hospitals

To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections across our hospitals, we have a dedicated Infection Prevention Team and policies which are evidence based and regularly reviewed.

We closely monitor infection rates across our hospitals and any risks and trends are reported to our Infection Prevention Assurance Committee, our Board of Directors and Public Health England.

If you have any concerns please contact the Infection Prevention Team on 0116 258 5448.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk