

Your Central Venous Catheter

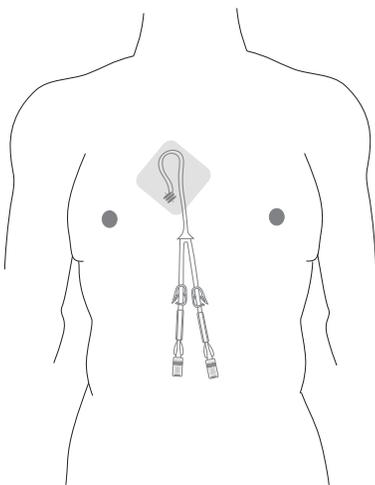
What to Expect

What is a tunneled central venous catheter?

A central venous catheter (CVC) is a thin, flexible tube that carries fluids and medicine into your body through a vein. It makes it easy to give blood samples.

The tube is placed in the chest wall and tunnels under the skin to a large vein near your heart. A cuff anchors the tube in place. A CVC may have more than one line, which is flushed with heparin or citrate to prevent blood clots.

Your CVC can safely remain in place for weeks or months. We will give you or a caregiver details on how to care for it.



Getting ready for CVC placement

Medicines:

- If you are taking Coumadin (warfarin), Plavix (clopidogrel) or other blood thinners, talk to your provider about how and when to stop it. Many of these drugs need to be stopped 5 or more days before the procedure.
- If you receive Lovenox (enoxaparin) shots, stop them 24 hours in advance.
- Ask your doctor if you need to adjust your diabetes medicines.
- You may take your other morning medicines with sips of water.

Eating and drinking:

- Eat and drink as usual until 8 hours before the procedure.
- You may have milk products (milk, yogurt, cottage cheese), an egg, rice or cereal until 6 hours before procedure.
- You may drink clear liquids until 2 hours before the procedure. Clear liquids include water, Gatorade, apple juice, coffee and tea without milk or sugar, jello and liquids you can see through.

Infants: no formula for 6 hours before or breast milk for 4 hours before. It is okay to drink water until 2 hours before.

Anti-germ scrub

You will clean your skin with an anti-germ liquid soap 2 times the day before and 1 time the day of the procedure. This soap kills the germs (bacteria) on your skin.

Wash your skin from the nipples to earlobes and both sides of the neck and chest:

1. Place the soap on a wet washcloth, scrub the skin and leave it on for 5 minutes.
2. Wash off with a clean washcloth and dry your skin with a clean towel.
3. Do NOT shave your chest. Shaving may irritate the skin too much. The doctor or nurse will see if your hair needs to be clipped.
4. Do not use lotion or powder on this area after washing.
5. Use clean pajamas, linens and clothes.

Placing the CVC

- You will go to Interventional Radiology. Please arrive 90 minutes before the time of your procedure.
- The nurse or doctor will explain what will happen and discuss the risks. We will ask you to sign a consent form.
- Placing a CVC takes about 60 minutes. You will then spend about 60 minutes in recovery.
- A germ-free cloth will cover your chest and head to help prevent infection. Please do not touch it.
- You will be given medicine to numb the area. When we place the CVC, you should feel pressure, but no pain.

- The CVC is stitched in place. The stitch should stay in place for at least 3 weeks. After that, you may choose to leave it or have it removed.
- Your incision (cut) will be red and tender for the first 2 days.
- It will take about 2 weeks to heal. During this time, avoid heavy lifting or forceful activities. Once the cut heals, you may return to most normal activities.

What are the risks?

Risks include:

- Redness, pain or swelling
- Infection
- Bleeding
- Blood clots—they could break off and travel to other parts of the body
- Irregular heartbeat
- Drop in blood pressure or heart rate
- The CVC may become blocked or break
- If there is a problem inserting it, we will try again using another vein.

We will watch you closely during placement and recovery. Problems will be treated right away.

Remember, **you must have an adult take you home.** You may **not** drive for 24 hours.