



Intravenous (IV) Peripheral Cannula

Information for patients

What is a peripheral cannula?

- This is a medical device (a small plastic tube) that is inserted through the skin into one of the veins, often placed in the arm or hand.
- This device allows Nurses and Doctors to administer fluids, blood/blood products or medication as required intravenously (into a vein).

Why do I need it?

- Your Doctor may have prescribed intravenous treatment, which may be the best or only way your treatment can be given.
- The treatment may be given as a 'drip' or injected using a syringe through the cannula.

How will it be put in?

- The cannula is inserted into the vein using a fine needle, which is then removed leaving the cannula in the vein. You may feel a sharp pain as the needle goes in, but this discomfort should then stop.
- A transparent dressing will then be applied.
- The cannula will also be flushed with saline water to check that it is in the vein, which may feel slightly cool as it goes in.
- The person putting in the cannula will take precautions to help prevent infection. They do this by:
 - ✓ Washing their hands and using personal protective equipment.
 - ✓ Only using sterile equipment.
 - ✓ Cleaning your skin carefully with an alcohol wipe (unless known allergies).

How will the staff look after the cannula?

- On the dressing, they will write the time and date when the cannula was put in.
- Make sure the dressing allows the inspection of the cannula site. Dressings should be clean and secured and changed if necessary.



- Check before giving any treatment that the cannula is working properly, flushes easily and the area around it is not red or painful.
- Inspect the cannula every four hours and report any concerns.
- Ensure all paperwork is completed.
- Normally cannulas are removed or changed every three days (72 hours) routinely.

How can I look after my cannula?

- By keeping it clean and dry and not touching it. Tell the Nurse if it becomes wet, dirty, loose, falls out, if there is any blood or pain in the area.
- By protecting it from knocks. Please wear watches and other jewellery on the opposite side to prevent them catching on the cannula.
- Taking extra care when dressing and undressing. It is advisable to wear clean loose-fitting sleeves.
- Please report to the medical staff if you have/feel pain, redness, swelling, shivering or you feel unusually hot or cold.

Clinical staff will remove the cannula:

- If the insertion site is red or sore or the cannula is dislodged or no longer functions.
- If it is not being used and there is no reason to think it may be used in the near future.
- When the treatment or procedure is finished.
- Before you are discharged from hospital (except in exceptional cases where treatment will continue at home).

Any questions?

- If you have any questions about your cannula, please ask the staff looking after you.
- If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Infection Control team, on 020 7288 3679, or you can ask the ward manager to contact us.



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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