

Taking your child home with a peripheral cannula

Information for parents and carers

You have been given this leaflet as your child is going home with a cannula in their vein. This leaflet is to support you with further information relating to caring for the cannula.

What is a cannula?

A cannula is a small plastic tube inserted into the vein, there is no needle once insertion is complete. The cannula can stay in the vein as long as it working and there are no complications. The cannula should be reviewed daily in the community by the Community Children's Nursing Service or by ward nursing staff if returning to hospital. If not in use or there are any signs of an infection it should be removed immediately.

Why does my child need a cannula?

A cannula is used for intravenous (IV) antibiotics, IV medication, IV fluids and blood products. It will allow your child to receive their treatment in the most effective form.

Why does my child need to go home with a cannula?

Your child will only go home with a cannula if you are happy to do so and they are due to receive IV medication the following day. Keeping the cannula in place reduces the need for daily cannula insertion which helps reduce the risk of introducing a new infection and is less distressful for your child.

How do I care for my child's cannula?

Once inserted by a trained member of hospital staff, they will place a clear adhesive dressing over the cannula to secure it in place.

You will not need to carry out any interventions to the cannula.

Be careful when removing your child's clothes.

Keep the cannula clean and dry.

If bathing, avoid getting the area wet.

If your child complains of any pain, or there is swelling or redness at the site, please inform a nurse or doctor immediately.

What happens to the cannula if it comes out?

It is important to protect the cannula, if it is knocked it can become dislodged and medication will not be able to be given. If the cannula comes out, please use a clean gauze or tissue and press to the punctured area till the bleeding has stopped. This may take 2-5 minutes or longer. Then cover the area with a plaster. Please place the cannula in a plastic bag then dispose of into the household waste. Call the ward you were discharged from or the Community Children's Nursing Service to let them know what has happened. If you are unable to stop the bleeding, you may need to bring your child back to the hospital to be assessed. If treatment is ongoing, a plan for a new cannula to be inserted will be discussed.

Once the cannula is removed what should I look out for?

Once removed there is a chance that an infection could develop at the cannula site. This is most common within the initial 48 hours. Continue to observe the area for pain, redness or swelling and seek medical attention if this happens.

Useful contact numbers

Ward name: Tel no:

RHCYP switchboard: 0131 536 1000

Community Children's Nursing Service: 0131 312 2336

Troubleshooting

Problem	Possible cause	What to do
High temperature Chills	Infection	Call CCNS / ward
Redness / tenderness / puss at line site	Infection	Call CCNS / ward
Swollen arm	Cannula no longer in vein Infection	Call CCNS / ward
Fluid evident / leaking at cannula site or line	Cannula no longer in vein Cannula broken	Wash hands Tighten bung at end of cannula Ensure clamp is closed (above any evident break) Call CCNS / ward
Bleeding at cannula site (after initial insertion)	Cannula no longer in vein Injury / trauma	Wash hands Press a clean gauze to the area until the bleeding has stopped Tape a clean gauze over cannula Call CCNS / ward
Dressing wet / loose / fallen off		Wash hands Tape a clean gauze over cannula Call CCNS / ward
Cannula accidentally removed / fallen out		Wash hands Press a clean gauze to the punctured area until bleeding has stopped Tape a clean gauze over site Call CCNS / ward