

Central Line Care

During your hospital stay

This handout explains how we care for your central line while you are in the hospital, and how you can help.

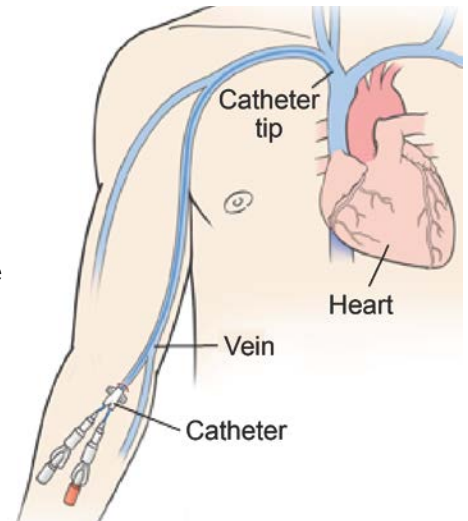
What is a central line?

A *central line* is a tube (*catheter*) that providers place in a large vein in your neck, chest, groin, or arm. A central line is also called a *central venous catheter*.

Why do I have a central line?

A central line is an important part of your treatment plan. It lets us easily:

- Give you medicines and fluids
- Access your vein for blood draws



A central line catheter may be placed in a vein in your arm.

Does it need special care?

Central lines need proper care to avoid an infection.

How You Can Help

- **Wash your hands often.** Your nurses also wash their hands often. Clean hands help lower the risk of many types of infections.
- Every day, you will bathe using chlorhexidine soap. Your nurse will give you instructions.
- Tell your nurse if you notice that the *dressing* (bandage) is dirty or wet.

What We Do

- We place a special disinfecting cap and a sticker on each *port* (outlet) that is not being used.
- We change your dressing from time to time. We also change it if it gets dirty or wet, or if it is not protecting the line well.
- We limit how many times we access your line and do our best to disconnect it only when needed.

If we believe your line is unsafe for any reason, we take the steps to fix it. We want to do all we can to protect you against infection. Please ask us if you have any questions about your care.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.
