**What is an Implanted Venous Access Device (Port-a-Cath™)?**

We have placed a central intravenous (IV) line, called a ‘port’, entirely under your skin in a vein to help give you important medicines and other fluids during your illness.

A port has a hollow flexible tube, called a catheter, attached to a portal body. We inject the medicines or fluids through the skin into the reservoir of the portal body. The reservoir slowly releases the medicines or fluids into your bloodstream.

**What are the advantages of a Port?**

- Some people like ports because the entire system is under the skin. There is only a small bump visible under the skin over the port.
- When you do not need therapy, caring for it only involves flushing it once a month.
- Active people prefer ports because there are almost no activity restrictions when the port does not have a needle in it. You can swim and carry on your usual activities.

**What are the disadvantages of a Port?**

- Placing and removing the port involves more work compared to other central lines.
- We need to give you a needle through the skin to access the port every time. Some people do not like the idea of another needle stick. You may ask your doctor about a prescription for numbing cream we can rub on your skin. This can make this needle stick more comfortable.

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**Diagram:**

An implantable port. Note. Figure courtesy of Macmillan Cancer Support. Reprinted with permission.

**English:** This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.

**Italian:** Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chieda aiuto a qualcuno.

**Spanish:** ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.
What complications should I look out for?

Ports are very durable and can last for years. As with other central IV lines, potential problems may occur, such as:

**Infection**

Germs can get in or around the port, causing an infection. An infection can become a serious problem if not treated promptly.

- **Contact your doctor or nurse right away if you have:**
  - Redness, swelling, warmth, tenderness or drainage where we have placed the port. You may have a “local infection.”
  - Signs that there is an infection in your bloodstream, such as:
    - Fever (temperature above 38°C or 100.4°F)
    - Chills
    - Vomiting (throwing up)
    - Diarrhea (loose, watery stool)
    - Fatigue (feeling tired)
    - Weakness
    - Loss of appetite.

**Tip Movement**

It is possible that the tip (the deepest portion) of your port can change position in your body. This can happen if you have excessive vomiting, coughing, sneezing or hiccups, or vigorous arm movement.

- **Contact your doctor or nurse right away if you:**
  - Feel pain or discomfort in the shoulder, jaw, ear, or neck
  - Feel coldness or fullness in the area
  - Hear flushing or have pain when you use your port.

**Breakage**

Internal catheter breaks are very rare. When they do occur, we will need to remove and replace the catheter.

- **Contact your doctor or nurse right away if:**
  - You notice your catheter is not working correctly
  - You have some swelling around the site of the port
  - Your heart rate is a little faster or beating irregularly
  - You feel short of breath for no obvious reason.

**Blockage**

If your port is blocked, you will not be able to flush, infuse medicines, or draw blood from the port. This may mean that the medicines are not reaching the proper place.

Blood clots in the port itself or in the vein around the port is a common cause of a blocked port. Clots can plug up the catheter, making infusions difficult.

- **Contact your doctor or nurse right away if:**
  - You notice a problem with your infusion
  - Your pump continues to alarm.

**Whom can I contact if I have questions or problems with my Port?**

- **CCAC Case Manager:** _______________________
- **Your Doctor:** ______________________________
- **Vascular Access Team (7:30 am to 11:30 pm):** ___________________
  You can also contact the team through locating.
  - **Tel:** (416) 242-1000