

Oncology and Haematology Services

Everything I need to know about going home with a Hickman line

Introduction

A Hickman line has been inserted into your chest to allow you to have intravenous chemotherapy and other treatments administered. The line also allows the haematology nursing staff to obtain blood samples.

The Hickman line has been tunnelled under the skin into one of the large veins in the body, and after the 14 day period of healing, will be fixed securely inside the chest. Stitches will be used. These will be removed, so ask the nursing staff about this.

Great care must be taken to avoid damage to your Hickman line so please report any changes or problems to the nursing staff or doctors as soon as possible.

The haematology nursing staff will look after the line whilst you are in hospital.

When you go home you will be required to attend the day unit weekly to have your Hickman line flushed and redressed.

Care of your Hickman line

Keeping the exit site clean and dry

- Avoid touching the line site with your hands.
- Immediately after the line insertion, a sterile dressing will be applied.
- The day after insertion, a transparent waterproof dressing will be applied and this can be left on the exit site for up to one week. If it needs to be changed more often, please let the nursing staff know.



Patient Information

Personal hygiene

- Your Hickman line should not be immersed in water. Therefore, you should not bathe or swim with your line in.
- Showers are permitted. The dressing is waterproof and should therefore be left in place. Pat it dry when you have finished showering.
- Do not use sponges or flannels around the line or line site. They harbour germs and can cause potentially serious infections. Use running water only.
- Do not tuck the ends of your Hickman line into your pants, trousers or skirt. If you find that the line is getting in the way it can be taped upwards using a medical tape that does not irritate the line or the skin.

Other precautions

- Do not open or move the clamps on the line.
- Do not remove the bionectors (caps) from the ends of the line.
- Do not pull on, or pinch the Hickman line.
- Be very careful when using scissors or nail clippers, anywhere near the Hickman line.
- Do not expose the line to either small children or pets.
- Do not expose the Hickman line to the sun.

When to ring the haematology unit for advice

- **Immediately in any of the following situations**
- If you have a temperature – 38 degrees centigrade or above
- If you feel unwell.
- If the line site is oozing, or red or swollen.
- If the line is accidentally snapped or cut.

Patient Information

Contact Numbers

Ward 34: 024 7696 5386 or 024 7696 5390

Day Unit: 024 7696 5490 or 024 7696 5491

Cancer backup Information Centre: 024 7696 6052

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7678 6878 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

Document History

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