



## Vascular Access Port Implantation

Port implantation is surgery to place (implant) a port under the skin. For vascular access, it is placed into a vein. The port allows medicines or nutrition to be sent right into your bloodstream. Blood can also be taken or given through the port. During the procedure, a long, thin tube called a catheter is threaded into one of your large veins. The tube is then attached to the port. This usually sits under the skin of your chest and causes a small bump. To use the port, a special needle is passed through your skin and into the port. The needle can stay in your skin for up to seven days, if needed. A port can stay in place for weeks or months or longer.

### Why is a vascular access port needed?

A vascular access port may allow health care providers to give you:

- Chemotherapy or other cancer-fighting drugs
- IV treatments, such as antibiotics or nutrition
- Hemodialysis (for kidney failure)

The port may also be used to draw blood.

### During the procedure

- The chest is used most often for the port. In some cases, your belly (abdomen) or arm will be used instead.
- The skin over the insertion area is numbed with local anesthetic.
- Ultrasound or X-rays are used to help the health care provider guide the catheter into the proper location during the procedure.
- A cut (incision) is made in the skin where the port will be placed. A small pocket for the port is formed under the skin.
- A second small incision is made in the skin near the first incision. A tunnel under the skin is created. The catheter is put through the tunnel and into the blood vessel.
- The skin is closed over the port. It is held shut with stitches (sutures) or surgical glue or tape. The second small incision is also closed.
- A chest X-ray may be done to make sure the port is placed properly.

### Recovering at home

- Take pain medicine as directed by your health care provider.
- Take it easy for 24 hours after the procedure. Avoid physical activity and heavy lifting until your health care provider says it's OK.
- Keep the port clean and dry. Ask when you can shower again. You will need to keep the port dry by covering it when you shower.
- Care for the insertion site as you are directed.
- Don't swim, bathe or do other activities that cause water to cover the insertion site.
- To keep the port from getting blocked with blood clots, flush it as often as directed. You should be shown the proper way to flush the port before you go home. It is important to follow these directions.

### When to seek medical care

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of the following:

- A fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher
- You can't access or use the port properly
- You can't flush the port or get a blood return
- The skin near the port is red, warm, swollen or broken
- You have shoulder pain on the side where the port is located
- You feel a heart flutter or racing heart
- Swollen arm, if the port is placed in your arm

