

Your Intravenous Canula (IV) What you need to know.

An IV is a plastic tube, inserted into a vein, usually in your hand or arm to provide fluids or medications directly into your bloodstream.

Your IV is usually put in immediately prior to your planned procedure.

Before inserting your IV the doctor or nurse will ask your name, ask about allergies, explain the procedure and obtain your consent prior to inserting your IV.

Whilst inserting your IV the doctor or nurse will practise hand hygiene and wear gloves. They will clean your skin with an antiseptic and use sterile equipment. Sometimes they may inject a small amount of local anaesthetic into the area where the IV will be inserted. The IV is inserted into a vein using a fine needle, which is removed after the plastic tube is in place. Your IV insertion site will be covered with a sterile dressing.

You may feel a sharp sting as the anaesthetic needle goes in, but this will soon pass. Similarly, if no local anaesthetic is used, you will also feel a sharp sting as the IV is inserted. Your IV is secured with a see-through dressing and is taped in place to prevent it falling out. Let staff know if you are concerned that the IV is not secure or if it becomes loose.

Whilst having an IV may be necessary for your treatment, there are some risks with having an IV.

There is a risk of infection with any procedure that punctures the skin and as your IV is inserted directly in your bloodstream, this can increase the risk of infection. The staff will undertake frequent observation of the IV site and follow strict procedures to prevent infection. Staff must practise hand hygiene before they touch your IV or the tubing, inject drugs or change the IV fluids. If you don't see the staff practising hand hygiene in front of you, please speak up and ask them to clean their hands before touching your IV.

Bruising and vein irritation can occur, particularly if there are multiple attempts at insertion.

Please try not to touch the IV site or pull the tubing and keep the dressing dry.

Please let staff know straight away if you notice any redness, swelling, skin irritation or pain around your IV or if you feel hot, cold or shivery.

Your IV will be removed as soon as you no longer require it.

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