PIVA Preventing Infections in Vascular Access

Patient Information Leaflet

Intravenous Catheters

An intravenous catheter *(tube / line)* has been inserted through your skin into your vein. This will allow the nurses and doctors to undertake a number of different tasks. This may include giving medication, fluids or taking samples of blood. If necessary it may also be used to give food supplements. The following advice is relevant where ever your care is given in the community or in hospital. Further information is available from the nurse looking after you.

Help to prevent infection

- Only touch the catheter when you have to.
- Wash your hands before touching the catheter.
- Have a daily shower to keep your skin clean.
- If you have a drip set and fluid – don't let it get wet.
- A dressing might be required – discuss this with your nurse.
- Wear clean clothes next to the catheter, whenever possible change them every day.
- Do not pull the catheter / drip set.

You must tell the nurse if you experience any of the following:

- Pain
  - at puncture site
  - when the fluids / drugs are given
  - when the catheter is capped off and not in use
  - when blood is taken
  - at any other time
- The area around the catheter looks red or feels hot.
- You feel hot / cold / shivery.
- The dressing is wet, soiled or falls off.

Some catheters may be in position for a long time. If you have this type of catheter the following points are recommended.

- Showering is recommended to prevent the line from being submerged in water and for this reason it is also advised to avoid having a bath or swimming until advised by your doctor.
- Don't wear jewellery on or near the site of your catheter e.g. around your neck as this may catch your catheter.
- Vigorous gym exercises are discouraged, some other pursuits are acceptable. You can discuss this with your nurse/doctor.
- If you are planning a trip abroad please discuss this with your doctor.
- If the line cracks or breaks, clamp, pinch or tie it above the break and contact your hospital.
- More information is available from the nurse looking after you.

Nurse Name: .....

Phone Number: .....

Additional Information: .....

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