

Going home with a cannula

What is a cannula?

A cannula is a small tube that has been placed into a vein in your arm or your hand in order to deliver your intravenous therapy. This treatment may be given in the community or you may need to return to the hospital to receive it. Your cannula should be replaced every 72-96 hours or removed by a nurse once venous access is no longer required (or earlier if a problem occurs). However, staff may have a valid reason for leaving the cannula in for longer; this will be explained to you on request. To help with cannula replacement, the dressing will have the date written on it of when the cannula was inserted .

How will your cannula be held in place?

Your cannula will have been fixed to your skin with a special 'see through' dressing. This is so we can observe the site and monitor for any signs of inflammation. The dressing should be changed by the nursing staff if soiled or loose. Additional dressings such as bandages/tubifast may be used to protect the cannula. If bandages are used, staff will remove these on a regular basis to check the cannula.

What can you do to help?

Inform staff if your cannula dressing is soiled or loose. The dressing is waterproof, however, we recommend that you do not soak your cannulated arm in water, such as when you have a bath. If the dressing gets wet in the shower, carefully pat it dry.

Report any redness, pain or swelling at the cannula site to a nurse when they visit or when you come back into hospital.

What if the cannula becomes displaced?

The cannula will be removed at the end of your treatment by the nursing staff. **Do not** try to remove the cannula yourself. If the cannula falls out, please do not attempt to reinsert the cannula. Elevate your arm and apply firm pressure over the site with a gauze swab or cotton wool for 3 minutes. Apply a small waterproof plaster to the site.

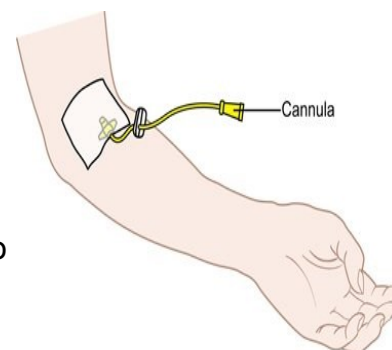


Diagram showing a cannula
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If you require any further information, please ask one of the nursing staff or call either of the following numbers:

Ambulatory Care (open 8.00am– 8.00pm every day): 01923 436 772

Out of hours: 03000 333 222

If you need this information in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217187** or email pals@whht.nhs.uk. TextRelay: (for Deaf & hard of hearing people only): please prefix number with '18001'.

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