Information About Your Child’s Procedure

Implantable Venous Port

Read this form so you understand the procedure and its risks. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand.

What is an implantable venous port?
An implantable venous port is an intravenous (IV) line that is completely inside the body. It consists of a port, which is a round piece of metal with a soft silicone top the size of a quarter, and a catheter, which is the thin, flexible tube attached to the port.

What is a port used for?
Some medications cannot be given through regular IV lines and some require frequent, painful needle insertions. A port provides a more comfortable way for the patient to receive IV nutrition and fluids, as well as medications such as chemotherapy. A port also allows the medical team to obtain blood samples more easily. To give medicines or take blood, we insert a needle through the skin into the port. We usually put numbing cream on the skin, so your child will not feel pain.

How is a port inserted?
Using ultrasound and live X-ray (fluoroscopy) for guidance, an interventional radiologist will insert the catheter into an access vein, usually in the neck. (Sometimes we use veins in the arm or upper leg.)
The radiologist will thread the catheter through the body until the tip is in the vein just above the heart. Your child will be protected by an X-ray shield during the procedure.

The other end of the catheter will be tunneled under the skin. At the place where the port will sit, we make a small incision called a pocket. Most of the time, the port is on the upper chest, between the nipple and collarbone. Sometimes the port is on the inside of the arm, above the elbow, or on the upper front of the thigh.

**Will my child be awake during the procedure?**
No. The procedure will be performed with IV sedation or general anesthesia.

**Will my child feel any pain?**
After the procedure, some children may feel mild discomfort and/or experience mild bruising in the neck or chest area for several days.

**How long does the procedure take?**
Approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

**What risks are associated with this procedure?**
This procedure is considered low-risk. However, potential complications include:
- bleeding
- infection
- injury to veins or other surrounding structures
- air in the veins (air embolism)
- abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia)
- collapse of the lung (pneumothorax)
- bleeding into the chest (hemothorax)
- contrast reaction (allergic reaction to X-ray dye)
When can I remove the bandages (dressings) after port placement?

Your child will have two bandages, one on the side of the neck and one on the chest. (Depending on where the port is placed, the bandages may be somewhere else.) After 48 hours, you may remove the gauze and the clear bandage from both sites. You will see pieces of Steri-Strips® (white tape), which should not be removed. It is OK to keep the incisions open to air while the Steri-Strips are in place. If the Steri-Strips don’t fall off on their own after seven days, you may remove them. Once the incision has healed and the Steri-Strips fall off, there is no need to place any type of bandage over the port when it is not being used. When the port is being used (needle is in place), the bandage over it must remain in place at all times.

When can my child bathe after port placement?

Your child should not shower or take a bath for 48 hours. After the bandages are removed your child may shower, but should face away from the spray to keep water off the site. Do not submerge the site in water (bath or pool) until the Steri-Strips have fallen off.

When the port is being used, the site must be kept clean and dry to prevent infection.

Are there any activity restrictions?

Your child will be able to resume most activities after five to seven days, including day care or school and sports or games such as biking or tennis. Your child should be discouraged from activities such as contact sports and rough playing, which may result in damage to the port. If you have questions about which activities are OK, please ask us.

When there is no needle in place, swimming or water activity is allowed once the incisions have healed. When a needle is in place, your child may not go swimming or submerge in a bathtub; it is important to keep the site dry to prevent infection.
How is the port removed?
Your child will be sedated or we will use general anesthesia. After injecting numbing medicine into the skin around the port, we will open the incision near the port, loosen the tissue around it and remove the port. The incision will be closed with dissolvable stitches, glue and Steri-Strips and covered with a bandage.

When can I remove the bandage after port removal?
This bandage must stay in place for 48 hours. After 48 hours, you may remove the gauze and clear bandage. The Steri-Strips should not be removed. Keep the incision open to air while the Steri-Strips are in place. If the Steri-Strips don’t fall off on their own after seven days, you may remove them. Once the incision has healed and the Steri-Strips fall off, there is no need to place any covering over the site.

When can my child bathe after port removal?
Your child should not shower or take a bath for 48 hours. After the bandage is removed, your child may shower, but should face away from the spray to keep water off the site, or sponge-bathe around the site. Do not submerge the site in water (bath or pool) until the Steri-Strips have fallen off.

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
• fever higher than 101° Fahrenheit
• bleeding or drainage (such as pus) from the incisions
• redness or swelling at incision sites
Call Interventional Radiology between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 215-590-7000. At the first prompt push 1, and at the second prompt push 2.
At all other times, call 215-590-1000 and ask to speak to the interventional radiologist on call.
The Interventional Radiology team is here to help you and your child. Please ask us if you have any questions or if anything is not clear.

Thank you!

A port provides a more comfortable way for the patient to receive IV nutrition and fluids, as well as medications such as chemotherapy.

Implantable Venous Port
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