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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Kate Nash
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Insertion and care of a midline catheter (page 1 of 2)

What is a midline catheter?

A midline catheter is a long thin polyurethane tube that is placed in one of the large veins of the upper arm or near the bend in the elbow. It is like a long cannula. It is used to give drugs, most usually intravenous antibiotics.

How long is it in for?

The midline can be left in for 28 days.

How is the midline inserted?

A midline will usually be inserted in the outpatient department or in the ward (if an inpatient). A specially trained doctor or nurse will do it. An ultrasound machine may be used to help find the most suitable vein. You may feel some minor discomfort whilst the catheter is being inserted. The procedure will take about 30 minutes. The catheter will be secured to your arm with a plaster-like device and transparent dressing.

What are the risks or potential complications?

- **Difficulty inserting the catheter** – the procedure may take slightly longer
- **Minor bruising or bleeding** – bleeding should stop within minutes of the procedure. Minor bruising will subside. If you are on blood thinning medications please tell your doctor/nurse.
- **Vein irritation** – if the vein is red or painful please tell your doctor/nurse.
- **Infection** – a clean or sterile procedure should be used when caring for your catheter. If the exit site is red or swollen, hot or tender to touch, or you have a fever, chills or feel generally unwell, please tell your doctor/nurse immediately.
- **Blood clot** – this is rare. If your arm is painful, swollen or discoloured, tell your doctor/nurse straight away
- **Catheter falls out** – press firmly over the hole in your skin for approximately 3-5 minutes, then apply a small sterile dressing. If bleeding continues apply more pressure to the area. Tell your doctor/nurse immediately.

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- **Catheter breakage** – you might notice some leakage from the catheter. If you do, clamp the catheter above the cut in the line and inform your doctor/nurse immediately.
- **Catheter blockage** – sometimes a blocked tube can be cleared by the doctor/nurse. If this is not possible the line may have to be removed.

Living with your midline

- The dressing and needle-free 'access port' will be changed weekly by your doctor/nurse. If either becomes soiled or loose they should be changed immediately.
- The midline needs to be flushed on a weekly basis when not in use. This will be arranged with your health professional.
- Do not get the dressing or access port wet as this is an infection risk.
- You may bath or shower but the dressing and port must be covered with waterproof protection.
- You can move your arm normally after the procedure but we advise you to avoid any strenuous work with the affected arm whilst the line is in place.
- Do not swim whilst you have the midline catheter in place.

Removal of the midline catheter

An appointment will be arranged with you for the removal of the line. It will be removed in the outpatients department and takes just a few minutes. It is a painless procedure. A nurse will usually do this for you.

Contact details

Respiratory Nurses: 01722 336262 ext 4792

Your named nurse _____

Your District Nurse _____

Your Consultant _____

Your appointment for removal of the midline catheter _____

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