

Let's Talk About...

Your child is going home with a central line. It is important to provide appropriate care to prevent complications. This care may include:

- Cap/extension tubing changes
- Heparin flushes
- Blood draws
- Medication administration

Your nurse will teach you how to do these important procedures. This handout will help you remember the steps you were taught.

How do I change a cap or extension tubing?

The end of the catheter is called a cap or extension. This end is not a permanent part of the catheter. It may become brittle and break, so it is necessary to change it regularly.



How often should I change a cap or extension tubing?

At least one time each week.

What items do I need?

- Exam gloves
- Alcohol wipes
- Cap or extension set (you may need both)
- 10 milliliter syringe
- A watch with a second hand

Cap and Extension: Central Line Care

- Heparin flush (10 units of heparin in each milliliter) if your child's line is heparin locked OR normal saline flush if your child's line has IV fluids attached

How is it done?

1. Wash your hands, turn off the IV fluid and clamp the catheter.
2. Put on exam gloves.
3. Draw the proper flush solution into the syringe. Flush the new cap or extension set with the flush solution so there is no air in the cap or tubing. Leave the syringe attached.
4. Remove the old cap or extension set.
5. Scrub the catheter hub vigorously for 5 seconds with the alcohol pad. Don't touch the hub with your gloved hands. Let the alcohol dry for at least 15 seconds.
6. Attach a new cap or extension set.
7. Unclamp the catheter. Gently pull back on the syringe to remove any air bubbles.
8. With the tip down, gently tap the syringe until any air rises to the plunger end.
9. Inject the remaining flush. Do not inject any air into the central line.
10. Resume infusion or clamp the catheter and remove the syringe.



How do I Flush a Central Line with Heparin?

Heparin is a blood thinner. Injecting a little bit of heparin mixed with fluid will keep blood clots from forming around your child's central line.

How often should I heparin flush my child's central line?

You must flush your child's central line every 12 hours, after drawing blood and after giving medicine through the central line.

What items do I need?

- Alcohol wipes
- 10 milliliter syringe
- Heparin flush solution (10 units per milliliter)
- A watch with a second hand

How is it done?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Vigorously scrub the cap with an alcohol pad for 5 seconds.
3. Let the alcohol dry. Don't touch the cap with your hands.
4. Attach the syringe to the cap and unclamp the catheter.
5. Instill heparin flush, as instructed by your home health company.
6. Clamp the catheter and remove the syringe.

How do I Draw Blood from a Central Line?

Your doctor may want you to take blood out of your child's central line for special tests.

What items do I need?

- Alcohol wipes
- Three 10 milliliter syringes
- Blood sample tubes
- Normal saline (NS)

How is it done?

1. Wash your hands. Turn off any IV fluids and clamp the line.
2. Vigorously scrub the catheter hub for 5 seconds with an alcohol prep pad. Don't touch the hub with your hands.
3. Draw normal saline fluid into the syringe. Attach the syringe with normal saline to the cap. Flush catheter with 3-5 milliliters of normal saline.
4. Clamp catheter and remove the syringe. Keep this syringe sterile.
5. Attach an empty syringe to the cap. Unclamp the catheter. Gently pull back on the syringe plunger and remove 3-5 milliliters of blood. Discard the syringe in a sharps container or garbage can.
6. Attach another 10 milliliter syringe to the cap and withdraw the volume of blood needed for the lab test.
7. Remove blood sample syringe, and attach the 10 milliliter heparin/Normal Saline syringe.
8. Instill 3-5 milliliters of Normal Saline and resume infusion, or flush with heparin. (Following above description).

How Do I Give Medicines through a Central Line?

Your doctor will order the medications that you should give your child.

What items do I need?

- Normal Saline
- 10 milliliter syringe
- Medication syringe
- Alcohol swab

How is it done?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Fill a syringe with Normal Saline flush.
3. Turn off any IV fluids. Clamp the line.

4. Attach the syringe to the cap. Inject 3-5 milliliters of flush into the line.
5. Clamp catheter.
6. Attach the medication syringe or medication tubing to the cap.
7. Give the medication as directed by your pharmacist or home care nurse.
8. Clamp the catheter.
9. Instill 3-5 milliliters of normal saline.
10. Restart the infusion or flush with heparin (following above description).

When should I call a health care provider?

- The catheter will not flush.
- Bleeding or leaking at the insertion site or connection. (See emergency teaching)
- Unable to draw blood from the line.
- Signs and symptoms of infection, which include fever, redness at site, fussiness, etc.
- Catheter displacement or damage.
- Pain in chest, ear, or neck when IV fluids are running.

Contact Numbers:
