

Going Home with a Saline Lock: After Your Visit

- A saline lock is a type of intravenous (IV) that can be used if you're able to go home between receiving your IV medicine.
- The advantage is that you don't have to have the tubing, IV bag, and pole with you between your IV therapy times.
- The IV is flushed with saline water so that the line doesn't clot. Saline water is water with the same amount of salt that your body has.
- It's called a "saline lock" because a small cap is placed at the end of the catheter to keep the saline water in the catheter.
- You'll have a saline lock for as long as need your medicine by IV. The doctor will tell you how long this will be.

Where do I go for my IV medicine?

- You'll be told to go to the same Emergency Department **or** to an outpatient IV Clinic.
- You'll be told how often to come to the Emergency Department or outpatient IV clinic (for example, every 8, 12, or 24 hours).
- Bring your Alberta Personal Health Card to every visit.

What will happen at each visit?

- A doctor will see you at every visit. If you have a wound, your dressing or splint may be taken off so that the nurse or doctor can see how your wound is healing.
- A nurse will check your IV site each time your IV medicine is given.

How do I care for the IV at home?

- Keep the IV site clean and dry.
- Use rubber gloves or put a plastic bag around the site when showering, washing dishes, etc.
- A small of blood or an air bubble in the tubing is okay and won't hurt you.

- If the IV catheter comes out part way, don't use it.
- If the IV catheter comes out all the way, put **constant** pressure over the site for 2 minutes to stop bleeding (no peeking).
 - If you're giving the next dose of medicine **at home**, go to the Emergency Department to have the IV restarted before your dose is due.
 - If you go to the Emergency Department or outpatient IV clinic for the medicine, be there at least 1 hour before your medicine is due to give time for the IV to be restarted.

When to get help

Call 9-1-1 if you think you're having a serious reaction to the medicine:

- you feel like your tongue or throat is swelling
- you're having trouble breathing

Go to the Emergency Department or call the clinic if:

- the IV site is red, hot to touch, or hurts
- you have a reaction to the medicine (rash, hives, or itchiness)

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 8-1-1.

This content may be updated without notice.

Last Revised: October 7, 2014

Author: Alberta Health Services

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