Care After Your Implanted Venous Access Port Placement

What is it?
An implanted port is a central venous access device that is inserted under the collarbone in a large blood vessel near the heart. The port and catheter are entirely under the skin. After the original incision has healed, you should only feel a small bump under the skin.

What is it used for?
By inserting a special needle through the skin into the port, IV fluids can be given or blood samples can be withdrawn. If your port will be used often, a catheter attached to a special needle will be left in the port. A sterile dressing will be applied to hold the catheter in place. The clinic will change the needle and dressing as needed.

What special care does the port need?
You may have some pain, swelling and bruising for one to two weeks after your implanted port is inserted. Your shoulder on the port side may feel stiff and sore. To relieve some of these symptoms you may try:
1. Ice – Ice is best if started right after your port is inserted. Apply ice (crushed ice in a plastic bag covered by a towel) to the port area for 15 to 20 minutes every hour as long as you need it. Do not sleep with an ice pack on because it may cause frostbite.
2. Heat – You can apply a warm compress (small towel dampened with hot water and placed in a plastic bag or heating pad set on low) to the port area for 15 to 20 minutes every hour as long as you need it. Do not sleep with heat on because it may cause a burn.
3. Medication – You can take over the counter medication (Tylenol, Motrin) as directed on the package to relieve pain and swelling as long as it does not interfere with any other medication that you are taking.

Because the catheter is in the blood vessel, the catheter will need to be flushed to prevent blood clots from forming. The nurse will flush the catheter after each use. If the catheter is not used regularly, it will need to be flushed monthly to keep the catheter patent (open).

Discharge instructions
• Do not take tub baths, use hot tubs or swim for the next 10 to 14 days.
• Keep the incision site clean and dry at all times. You may shower, but if a dressing is in place, you need to put a waterproof covering over the dressing while in the shower.
• No lifting, pushing or pulling over 10 pounds for the next 10 to 14 days.
• Do not remove the original dressing. Your dressing will be changed at the clinic. Your first dressing change appointment is on _______________.

For the next 24 hours:
• Do not drive.
• Do not operate heavy or potentially harmful equipment.
• Do not make legally binding decisions.
• Do not drink alcohol, including beer.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following:
• Fever over 100.4° F
• Redness, tenderness or warmth around the port site
• Drainage from the incision site
• Swelling in your face or neck
• Red streak from the port site up your chest
• Pain in your shoulder, arms or neck that does not go away or gets worse
• Movement of the port

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