



The unique feature of an implantable port is that it is placed completely under the skin. This placement allows almost complete freedom of movement for the patient. When the port is in place, repeated access to the bloodstream to administer IV therapy or withdraw blood can be accomplished with greater ease and less discomfort. In addition, the port requires minimal care.

**Important Points to Remember:**

- When the port is accessed (needle in place), the needle, extension set and dressing must be changed weekly. The injection cap on the end of the extension set must also be changed weekly unless the port is used for drawing blood, then the injection cap must be changed after each blood draw. This will traditionally be done by a nurse in your home, the physician's office or the hospital.
- To keep the port from clotting when the catheter is being used for regular medication administration, it must be flushed using the prescribed amounts of saline and Heparin after each dose of medication. If you are responsible for administering your own IV medication, you will be the one performing this "flushing" procedure as instructed. If a nurse is the one administering your IV medication, then he/she will perform the "flush".
- If the port is not being used for medication administration regularly, the port must be accessed with a non-coring needle and flushed monthly with the prescribed amounts of saline and Heparin in order to maintain the catheter's patency. This will traditionally be done by a nurse in your home, the physician's office or the hospital.

If you or your primary caregiver will be responsible (very unusual) for accessing the port and/ or drawing blood from the port, you will be given specific instructions on the specific steps to follow when performing these procedures.

In order to minimize complications associated with implantable ports:

- Protect the area where the port has been implanted from injury.
- Examine your port site daily for any redness, swelling or drainage. If any of these occur, call your nurse or physician.
- Contact your physician if you develop a fever  $> 101^{\circ}$ .