Flush your Central Line Catheter

Each lumen of your Central Line Catheter needs to be flushed once a day with a Heparin Flush. A lumen is a small tube within your catheter. These same steps can be used for either a PICC or a Hickman Central Line. You may or may not choose to wear gloves, but handwashing is a must!

Heparin is a medicine that prevents blood clots.
- Sometimes saline is used instead of heparin.
- Your nurse will let you know if you should use saline.

To flush your catheter, follow the steps on the next pages.
Step 1
Clean your work table with a disinfectant wipe.

Step 2
Gather your supplies (enough for each lumen):
- Catheter caps
- Alcohol wipes
- Prefilled heparin or saline flush
- Gloves – optional
- Alcohol cover (Curos®) – optional

Step 3
- Wash your hands well with soap and water.
- Dry your hands with a clean paper towel.
- You may also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Step 4
If you have been taught to or want to use gloves, put them on now.

Step 5
Take the flush syringe from the package.
Step 6

• Hold the syringe straight up in the air with the plunger pointing to the floor.

• Tap the syringe so that any air bubbles rise to the top.

Step 7

• Take off the syringe cap.

Step 8

• Push the plunger to the 5mL mark. This will take out any air and extra flush from the syringe. Some flush may drip out. This is okay.

• Hold the syringe upright. Do not let it touch anything.
Step 9 - A

If You Have a Green Alcohol Cover Over Your Catheter Cap

- Remove the green alcohol cover only (do not reuse).
- Leave the catheter cap in place.
- Do **NOT** let the end of the catheter cap touch anything, including your body.

OR

Step 9 - B

If You Do **NOT** Have a Green Alcohol Cover Over Your Catheter Cap

- Open the alcohol wipe.
- Scrub the catheter cap with the alcohol wipe for at least 10 seconds.
- Let it dry completely.
- Do **NOT** let the end of the catheter cap touch anything, including your body.
**Step 10**

- Hold the catheter cap.
- Push in and screw the flush syringe onto the end of the catheter cap.

**Step 11**

- Open the clamp on the catheter.

**Step 12**

- With steady pressure, start to push the flush plunger.
- Clamp the catheter while pushing in the last 0.5 mL of flush into the catheter. This may keep blood from backing into your catheter.
- **If it is hard to push the flush, go to Step 19.**
- Do not use force to flush.
**Step 13**

- Be sure that the clamp is over the wording “**clamp here.**”

- Close the clamp on the catheter. You should hear a click.

**Step 14**

- Hold the catheter cap tightly and unscrew the syringe from the catheter.

- Be careful not to loosen the catheter cap from the catheter.

**Step 15**

*Important! Always check to be sure the catheter cap is on tight!*
Step 16

• If available, put a new green alcohol cover (Curos®) onto the catheter cap.

Step 17

• Now flush all the other lumens of the catheter. Do Steps 1 through 16 again.

Step 18

• After you flush all your lumens, throw your supplies away.

Step 19

• **If it is hard to push the flush,** check to make sure the clamp is open. If it was clamped, open the clamp and try **Step 12** again.

• **If it is still hard to push, STOP. Do not push the flush.** Close the clamp. Unscrew and remove the syringe. **Call your Doctor or Home Care Nurse.**
The above information contains some, but not necessarily all, of the information that you may need to care for your central line. Please speak with your doctor or nurse if you have questions or issues you may experience.

This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team about your treatment and effects you may experience during and after the use of a central line.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.

*Developed by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women’s Hospital Central Line Education Team, August 2013.*