

What is a port?

An implanted port is a small device with a flexible tube called a catheter. The port is placed under the skin and the catheter is inserted into a blood vessel. The port acts like an IV to the bloodstream. A special needle is inserted through your skin into the soft top of the port so that chemotherapy, medications, IV fluids and blood products can be given. The port is placed by a surgeon or interventional radiologist during an outpatient procedure at the hospital, and is often located on the upper chest or arm. This procedure is usually performed under local anesthesia.

What are the advantages?

A port allows the nurse to deliver medications to you, or withdraw blood samples without having to stick a needle into your arm. The port is easily accessed, causing you less discomfort and providing a safer method of administering your treatment. Because this vein is larger than the veins in your arm, the medications are less harmful to your veins. Some ports can be used for administering CT scan dye.

What are the disadvantages?

On rare occasions the port may “fracture” meaning the catheter breaks away from the port. If this occurs, the port would need to be removed. Infection is a concern whenever you have a foreign device in your body. Although this is unlikely, you will be monitored for this.

How do I care for my port?

You will have a small incision. During the first couple of days after receiving your port, it will be important to avoid heavy exertion and to follow any special instructions by the doctor who placed the port. Once the incision has healed you will not have to take any special care of your port and can resume normal activities. Your port can remain in place indefinitely, however some people choose to remove it after they complete their treatment if approved by their doctor.

The port must be flushed by your provider every 4 weeks when not being used regularly.

You will be given a medical alert identification card at the time of insertion. Be sure to keep this with you as it describes the type of port you have and provides valuable information regarding your port.

For more information feel free to visit the website chemocare.com