

Implanted Port



What is a port? A 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 medications and IV fluids can be given.

The port is placed by a surgeon or interventional radiologist under local anesthesia during an outpatient procedure in the upper chest or arm.

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

What are the disadvantages of a port? 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 there is a foreign device in the body. Although this is unlikely, the care team will monitor for this. It is important to report any signs of infection (redness, tenderness, fever) to the care team.

How do you care for your port? You will have a small incision. During the first couple of days after receiving your port, it will be important to avoid heavy lifting 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.