

# **Preventing Bloodstream Infections**

**Narrator**

While in the hospital, you may need to receive blood, fluids, or medications through a tube that is placed into a large vein. That tube, called a central line, or central catheter, like all intravenous tubes, may provide a potential entry for bacteria.

**Dr. William Schaffner**

They can tunnel along the catheter and then get into the bloodstream and then there we are. We have a serious infection as a consequence.

**Narrator**

To help lower the risk of infection, make sure that everyone entering and leaving your room washes or sanitizes their hands. If you do not see them doing it, insist that they do so.

If the skin around the catheter entry site becomes sore and red, alert your healthcare provider immediately. Sudden fever or chills may be the first sign of a bloodstream infection caused by an unnoticed infection around the I.V. site.

Let hospital personnel know immediately if the bandage covering the catheter comes off or becomes wet or dirty.

Also, you should ask your health professional if your catheter is still needed.

**Dr. Michael Bell**

You should be very comfortable asking your doctor or your nurse every day, "Is it time for this to come out yet? Tomorrow? Okay, how about tomorrow?" And then remind them again the next day, because they can use the reminder, and if they're thinking about it, it will come out as soon as possible and reduce your chance of a bloodstream infection.

**Narrator**

Bloodstream infections associated with intravenous catheters are serious, but knowing how to prevent them can help keep you infection free.