
Discharge Instructions: Flushing Your Midline Catheter at Home

Your midline catheter is used to give medicine or fluids. This means that you will likely need to flush it to keep it from getting clogged or blocked. A clogged or blocked line will need to be taken out and replaced.

When to flush your midline catheter

You'll need to flush your midline catheter as often as advised by your healthcare team. Usually, you will need to flush it before and after each use. If the catheter is not in active use, you may need to flush it less often. Talk with your healthcare provider about how often you should flush it. Also, ask your provider if you and your caregiver can perform the procedure before you are discharged to make sure that you understand what you are to do.

What you'll need

- **Flushing solution.** This is the liquid that you will send through the catheter. Your healthcare provider will tell you what kind to use and how much to use. In most cases, it's saline solution. In some cases, you may also need to flush with a heparin solution after the saline. Heparin is a medicine that thins the blood. It helps prevent blood from clotting in and around the catheter.
- **Syringe.** This is a device used to give an injection or shot. A syringe is used to flush your catheter with the solution. You will likely use prefilled syringes.
- **Alcohol wipes or rubbing alcohol and cotton balls.** You'll use these to clean the end of the catheter (port). This helps prevent germs from going into your catheter.
- **Medical gloves.** These will help keep your catheter clean and prevent infection.

Flushing your catheter

Follow these steps as often as your healthcare provider has advised.

Step 1: Get prepared

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and clean, running water. Or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Get your supplies together. If you're not using prefilled syringes, fill the syringe with the solution as you were shown.

Step 2: Flush the catheter

- Put on clean medical gloves.
- Scrub the top and sides of the port with an alcohol wipe for about 15 seconds. Use a twisting motion, like you are juicing an orange. Let the port dry completely. Don't fan the port or blow on it to make it dry. Keep the port from touching anything until

you connect the syringe. If you accidentally touch the port, clean it again with a new alcohol wipe.

- Open the clamp if there is one.
- Take the cap off the needle or tip of the syringe. Connect the syringe to the port.
- Push in the plunger of the syringe slowly and smoothly. Don't force the plunger. You shouldn't feel any pressure when you push the fluid into the catheter. If you do, stop right away and call your healthcare provider.
- If there is a clamp on the catheter, close it just before the syringe is empty. This stops blood from flowing back into the catheter.
- Remove the syringe from the port and throw it away in a special container, called a sharps container.
- Remove your medical gloves.
- Wash your hands again using soap and clean, running water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

When to call your healthcare provider

Make sure you know what number to call with questions or problems, even on evenings, weekends, and holidays. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have:

- Temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as advised by your healthcare provider
- Swelling, redness, drainage, or pain around the catheter site
- Bleeding from the catheter site
- Breaks, cracks, leaks, or other damage in the catheter or catheter falls out
- Feeling of resistance or pressure when flushing the catheter
- Problems flushing the catheter
- Problems with medicine or fluids going into the catheter