
IV Care: Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) Therapy

When you use total parenteral nutrition (TPN), fluids that contain nutrients and minerals feed your body without passing through your stomach. TPN is given through an IV (intravenous) line that is controlled by an infusion pump. The infusion pump controls exactly how much of the TPN solution you receive.

Know your TPN fluids

- Read the medicine sheet that comes with the TPN. Be aware of any warnings and side effects.
- Check the label on the TPN bag before starting an infusion. Make sure your name is on it. Check that the TPN fluids and dose are correct.
- Don't use TPN with an expired date.
- Don't use TPN if the bag is leaking.
- Don't use TPN if it looks cloudy, lumpy, or oily.
- Don't use TPN if it has particles floating in it.

Handle supplies as directed

- Store TPN in the refrigerator. Don't freeze it.
- Before using TPN, let it get close to room temperature. Take it out of the refrigerator 1 hour before use. Don't heat.
- If vitamins or minerals need to be added to the TPN, do so as directed.
- Put all used needles and syringes in a special container (sharps container) for safe disposal later.
- When the infusion is done, put the used supplies in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and throw it in the trash.

Track your health

- Weigh yourself daily. If you lose or gain weight, tell your health care provider. Your TPN dose may need adjusting.
- Keep track of your urine output as directed. Tell your provider if the amount increases or decreases a lot.
- Check your blood sugar if directed. Your provider may take a blood sample from you each week. This is to make sure your TPN dose is right for you.

Know these IV basics

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- Keep the dressing over the catheter exit site clean and dry. Change the dressing as directed if it comes loose or gets soiled or wet.
 - Flush the catheter with saline or heparin as directed to keep the IV line flowing well.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching any of your supplies.
 - Wipe all injection sites with alcohol.
 - Be sure all IV supplies are in sealed, sterile packets. If sterile packets are open, throw away those supplies.
 - Don't stop the pump or change settings during an IV infusion unless your health care provider tells you to do so.

Call 911

Call 911 if you have chest pain or trouble breathing.

When to contact your doctor

Contact your health care provider or get medical care right away if you have any of the following:

- Redness or swelling near the catheter exit site or at any spot along the catheter line
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider
- Chills
- Swelling in the arm, neck, or chest
- Drainage at the catheter exit site
- The catheter slips or comes out
- The TPN doesn't flow well through the tubing
- The alarm on the infusion pump comes on
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Headache
- Weakness, shaking, or sweating
- Thirst