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## IV Care: Using IV Antibiotics

Antibiotics are medicines that help your body fight infection. Some types of antibiotics can be given only by IV (intravenous line). Always gather and inspect your supplies before starting IV care.

### Know your medicine

- Read the medicine sheet that comes with the antibiotic. Be aware of any warnings and side effects.
- Check the medicine label before starting an IV. Make sure the patient name, the medicine name, and the dose are correct.
- Don't use medicine with an expired date.
- Don't use medicine that has anything floating in it.
- Don't use an IV bag with cracks or tears.

### Clean worksite and hands

- Wipe the worksite before setting up for IV care. Use alcohol or soap and water. Put supplies on a fresh paper towel.
- Wash your hands. Use warm water and liquid soap. Scrub briskly for 1 minute. Wash between your fingers. Rinse.
- Dry your hands with a fresh paper towel. Use the paper towel to turn off the water. Set the paper towel aside, and throw it away after the IV care is done.

### Handle supplies as directed

- Store the antibiotic in a cool, dark place. Refrigerate it if the package says you should.
- Before using it, allow the antibiotic to get close to room temperature. Don't heat.
- Run an IV as often as prescribed.
- Put all used needles and syringes in a special container (sharps container). You can buy a sharps container at a pharmacy or medical supply store. You can also use an empty laundry detergent bottle, or any other puncture-proof container and lid.
- When the IV is done, put the used supplies in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and throw it in the trash.

### Know these IV basics

- Hang the IV bag. The drip chamber should be at least 18 inches above your head.
- Wipe all injection sites with alcohol before use.
- Clean the catheter exit site as often as directed.
- Tape the IV tubing in place and cover the insertion site with dressing to keep it clean as directed.
- Flush the catheter with saline or heparin as directed.
- Be sure all IV supplies are in sealed packets. If germ-free (sterile) packets are open, throw away those supplies.

### Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have trouble breathing.

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## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of the following occur:

- Rash or hives
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed
- Chills
- Redness near the catheter exit site or at any spot along the catheter line
- Swelling in your arm, neck, or chest
- Drainage at the exit site
- The catheter slips or comes out
- The IV fluid doesn't flow well through the tubing
- Break in the tubing

**StayWell last reviewed this educational content on 1/1/2020**

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