

Accessing Your Central Venous Catheter for Hemodialysis

A Central Venous Catheter is one way for your healthcare team to access your bloodstream for Hemodialysis.

Whenever your Catheter is being accessed, your healthcare provider will follow specific steps to prevent infection. Accessing your CVC should only be done in a clean area by a trained healthcare provider.

Anybody coming into contact with your Catheter must wash their hands thoroughly using soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Your healthcare provider will wear gloves and a mask. And when your catheter is being accessed you have to wear a mask also.

When getting ready for hemodialysis, your healthcare provider will remove the caps on your lumens to clean and disinfect the hubs underneath. This is an important step to prevent infection.

Always let the area air dry. Do not fan or blow on the site to speed things up. This will only increase your risk for infection.

Next, your healthcare provider will attach an empty sterile syringe to your lumen to remove the locking solution.

Locking solution is a special medication, like Heparin, that keeps your catheter open between treatment sessions.

Now the syringe will be removed and your lumen will be cleaned again.

Your healthcare provider will repeat all of these steps on the other lumen making sure both lines are sterile and ready for Hemodialysis.

“Now I am going to flush this lumen.”

Before you can begin your Hemodialysis session, both lines must be flushed. Flushing your Catheter is a way to keep it open and free of any blockages. This is very important and will be done before and after hemodialysis.

To flush your catheter, your healthcare provider will attach a syringe of normal saline solution and push it through the line.

Both lines must be flushed before and after Hemodialysis by a trained healthcare professional.

You should never try to flush your catheter yourself.

Next the lines to the hemodialysis machine can be attached to your lumens.

One lumen takes blood out of your body, while the other returns the clean blood back into your body.

Depending on your health and the amount of toxins in your blood, your hemodialysis session may take several hours to clean your blood.

Once your hemodialysis session is over, your healthcare provider will flush your Catheter with normal saline again to keep it open.

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Lastly, your healthcare provider will inject a locking solution back into your lumens, disinfect the hubs again, and put sterile caps on both lumens to protect you against infection until your next hemodialysis session.

So, let's review: each time your Central line is accessed for Hemodialysis, your healthcare provider will: clean both of your lines, remove the locking solution, flush each line, and attach the lines for Hemodialysis.

When your session is complete, your healthcare provider will: flush both lines again, inject locking solution into both lines, clean the lines, and cap both ends.

Each of these steps is important to help keep your central line working well and to prevent infection.