

Living With Your Implanted Access Port

An implanted port can be used for several weeks to months, if it is kept infection free and in good working order. To ensure it stays working safely, here are some things to keep in mind.

For the first 5 to 7 days after getting an implanted port, it is important to keep the area dry. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions about when to shower. If the port is in your chest, you may have a tub bath but be very careful to keep the area covered with a bandage and dry. After the area has completely healed you will be able to shower, bathe and swim when your port is not in use.

With an implanted access port you can return to many of your normal activities, but you may want to avoid contact sports. Wear loose clothing that does not rub on your port area. And let all of your healthcare providers, including your dentist, know you have an implanted port before any appointments.

Every day, check the area for signs of infection. If you notice redness, swelling, warmth, tenderness, pain, blood at the site, or have a fever; contact your healthcare provider right away. All solutions and medications should go through your port easily. Never force solution through the port. If you ever have trouble flushing the port or pushing medication through the port, contact your healthcare provider.

And if you have trouble breathing, a fast or irregular heartbeat, feel pain or notice swelling in your arm, neck, shoulder or chest, a headache or feel dizzy, or the port area feels cold, changes color or you can't feel it; call 911 immediately. These can be signs of a serious complication. Get help right away.