

Caring for Your Implanted Port

Sometimes a health condition means you need medicine on a regular schedule over a long period of time.

To make this easier to do, doctors can use an implanted port.

The port is placed under the skin of your chest, below your collarbone.

It's about the size of a quarter, but thicker.

It looks like a bump under your skin.

A thin, flexible tube called a catheter goes from the port into a large vein.

Your care provider puts medicine, fluids, and whatever else you need into the port.

It's easy to care for, but there are a few things you have to watch for.

You may have stitches, surgical glue, or tape over the cut-- the incision--where the port was put in.

Your care team will tell you how to take care of the incision.

When the incision is healed, you can shower, and you can wash the area with soap and water.

But don't put a lot of pressure on the port.

That may move the port out of its position.

You can do a few things to avoid problems with the port.

Always wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them with a clean cloth before you touch the incision or the area around it.

Wear loose clothing over the port, and be careful not to rub it when you get dressed.

In the first few days or until your doctor says it's okay, try not to move your arm or upper body in a way that could pull the catheter out.

You'll get a medical alert card with information about your port.

Carry this with you.

If you need emergency care, the card will tell the care providers that you have a port.

Now, there are a few things you have to watch for.

Call your care team right away if you have increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness near the port, or a fever; if your port has moved; or if you have pain or swelling in your neck or arm.

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Your port is an important part of your treatment plan.

When you take care of it, you're taking care of yourself.

You're helping yourself get better.

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