



Answers to your questions about a Port-a-Cath

What is a Port-a-Cath?

A Port-a-Cath is a device that is surgically implanted under the skin. It is made up of an opening with a silicone bubble (the “septum”), which is attached to a catheter leading into a blood vessel.

It allows nurses to give a person medication or draw blood without repeated needlesticks into a blood vessel.

To use the port, nurses put a needle into the septum.

Why would I need one?

Your doctor recommends that you receive this device because your treatment requires that you be given medication often or have frequent blood draws. This will be easier and more comfortable for you with a Port-a-Cath.

What does it look like?

The port looks like a small, raised bump under your skin. It does not need special care, and it will not affect your daily activities.

How does it feel?

When it is not in use, you will not feel the port at all. When your nurse needs to access it, most patients feel a mild prick when the needle is inserted.

Will the device need routine care?

Un-accessed port

To make sure the port works the way it should, your nurse will access the port with a needle at least every 4 weeks to flush the catheter with normal saline and heparin.

Accessed port (needle in place)

If you have an accessed port (with a needle in place):

1. A nurse will access your port with a special needle when you need intravenous (I.V.) medications or blood draws.
2. A dressing will be placed over the needle to protect the area around the port.
3. A nurse will change the needle and dressing every 7 days.
4. Each time after your port is used, the nurse will flush the catheter with normal saline and heparin.
5. Before you leave the hospital, the nurse will remove the needle.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask your nurse or doctor.

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