A midline catheter is a special type of IV (intravenous) line that is placed in a vein near your elbow. The catheter is put into a vein and guided up into your upper arm. This type of IV can be used while you are in the hospital or at home to give antibiotics, blood products, IV fluids or other medicines. Blood may also be drawn from a midline catheter.

How is a Midline Catheter Placed?

A midline catheter can be put in by a doctor or specially trained nurse. This can be done in your hospital room or in the radiology department.

- You will need to lie flat and keep your arm straight when the catheter is being put in.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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Your arm will be cleaned and covered with a sterile cloth to help prevent infection.

A numbing medicine is used to decrease discomfort where the catheter will be placed. Numbing medicine is given using a small needle injection into the top layers of your skin.

The catheter will be placed into a vein in your arm with a special type of needle. An ultrasound machine may be used to see the veins in your arm.

You may be asked to turn your head or move your arm and wrist. This helps the catheter move through the vein to the correct position.

After the catheter is put in, it is secured with an anchor device and covered with a sterile dressing.

How to Care for Your Midline Catheter

You will need to put warm compresses on your shoulder above the catheter dressing for the first 2 to 3 days. This will help decrease problems with the catheter after it has been placed.

- Put a warm compress on the shoulder of the arm with the catheter.
- **Do not** put the compress on or near your catheter dressing as this can create moisture under the dressing.
- Leave the compress on your shoulder for 20 minutes and then remove.
- The compress should be put on your shoulder 4 times each day for the first 2 to 3 days after your catheter is placed.

Activity Limits with Your Midline Catheter

After the catheter is placed, you will need to limit some of your activities:

- **Do not use sharp objects such as scissors or razors near your catheter.**
- **Do not** do activities that use repeat movements with your arm such as golfing, tennis or pushing a vacuum. These activities may cause the catheter to move out of place.
- **Do not** lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds.
You may take showers with the catheter in place. **Cover the catheter site with plastic wrap to keep the dressing and the catheter area dry.**

**Do not** swim or do activities that may cause your arm with the catheter to be in water. This will loosen the dressing and increase the risk for infection.

**Midline Catheter Care at Home**

- Your catheter will need special care to keep it clean and working well. This includes changing the dressing, flushing the lumen(s) and changing the lumen caps.

- Because it is in your arm, you will not be able to do the special care needed for the catheter. The catheter care may be done by your caregiver or nurse. Your nurse will work with you and your family to teach you how to care for your catheter.

**Call your doctor or home care nurse if you have:**

- Increased bruising, swelling or tenderness in the arm where the catheter was placed

- Increased redness at the site where your catheter was put in

- Chills or fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

- Warmth or drainage leaking from the catheter site

- Any other problems with your catheter