

A Guide to Implanted *Ports* as a Method of Chemotherapy Delivery



Ask your doctor or nurse about how a port may help to positively impact your lifestyle and comfort during chemotherapy delivery.



9

OUT OF 10 PATIENTS

surveyed in one study stated that use of a port improved their quality of life due to decreased pain, need for fewer needlesticks, and quicker blood withdrawals.¹

You can control the way you fight cancer

Let's face it, getting chemotherapy isn't easy—no one likes getting stuck by a needle. The poking, prodding, and potential failed attempts to find a peripheral vein in your arms or hands can be painful. Also, repeated use of peripheral I.V.s for blood work and additional I.V.s may cause damage to the veins in your arm and hand. After meeting with your healthcare provider, you may find an alternative vascular access device (VAD) that may help minimize your discomfort.

VADs, particularly implanted *ports*, have several advantages and disadvantages over other ways of receiving I.V. chemotherapy.²

- **Lifestyle.** Implanted *ports*, compared to other centrally placed vascular access devices, are more likely to permit you to go about your normal day-to-day activities, like showering, swimming, jogging, and playing with your children. Ask your doctor or nurse about specific activities and the appropriate time to resume them.
- **Comfort.** Once placed, a *port* can remain for as long as your doctor determines you need it. While the *port* itself will still need to be accessed with a special needle, there will be a decreased need for the sometimes painful poking and prodding to find a peripheral vein in the arms or hands with an I.V. every time you receive chemotherapy or have your blood drawn.
- **Increased Privacy and Appearance.** Implanted *ports* are small and can be hidden from view. With an implanted *port*, there is no exposed device and, because *ports* are typically placed in the chest, there's no potential for bruised arms. No one needs to know about your treatment unless you want them to.
- **Long-term Health.** Since *ports* are typically placed in the chest, *port* usage can reduce the likelihood of damage to the peripheral veins in your arm or hand. This may benefit a patient who needs blood work or I.V.s down the road.

A port is not for everyone—especially patients with a history of forming blood clots, who have had previous vascular access surgery, or who are not emotionally prepared to have an implanted medical device. Like any vascular access procedure, there is always a risk of complications, including venous blood clots, skin erosion, infection, a collapsed lung, or clotting of the port catheter. Talk to your physician or nurse about these and other risks, and whether a *port* or other treatment delivery methods are right for you.

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- Talk to your oncologist or nurse about your I.V. chemotherapy delivery options
- Depending on your treatment, implanted *ports* may be an option
- Ask your healthcare provider for written information about *ports*
- Compare the advantages and disadvantages of *ports* and other ways to receive your I.V. chemotherapy
- Talk to other patients about their personal experiences with *ports*



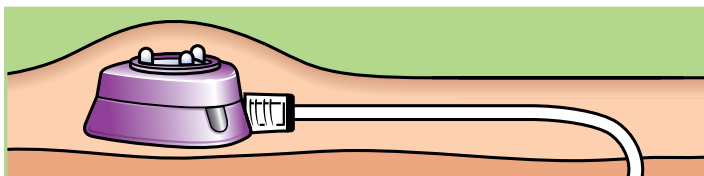
Check healthcare coverage

- Medicare and Medicaid (U.S.) cover out-patient *port* placement³
- Because health insurance policies vary, check with your insurance company to see if *ports* are included in your coverage
- Hospital staff can assist you in applying for coverage

Keep the lines of communication open

- Don't hesitate to talk to your doctor or nurse about any questions or concerns you may have about chemotherapy delivery—they are always there for support

Getting your Port placed



- Your doctor will refer you to a physician who specializes in *port* placement
- Placement of the *port* is typically done via a minor surgical procedure that usually doesn't require general anesthesia. This could be done as an outpatient procedure³
- The *port* is placed just below your skin, and is connected to a small flexible tube called a catheter that is inserted directly into a blood vessel³
- Use of an implanted *port* carries risks associated with a minor surgical procedure and vascular access. Potential complications include: internal bleeding, nerve damage, collapsed lung, fluid build up around the lungs, blood clot formation, and accidental cutting or puncturing of blood vessels.

Maintain your Port

- After each treatment, and occasionally between treatments, the *port* and catheter should be flushed with a special solution³
- Ask your doctor or nurse how often your *port* needs to be flushed



When you fight cancer, it helps to know you're not in it alone.

Cancer is a disease that touches many lives, and learning from each other makes us all stronger. That's why we created the VEINS FOR LIFE* awareness program. The VEINS FOR LIFE* awareness program is for and about educating chemotherapy patients and their families about implanted *port* usage and other intravenous (I.V.) chemotherapy delivery options.

With the help of patients who have gone through chemotherapy, as well as input from medical experts, the VEINS FOR LIFE* awareness program will help you take an active role in decisions regarding the way you receive your I.V. chemotherapy.

Choosing a method of chemotherapy delivery is an important decision for you and your doctor. That's because the decisions you and your doctor or nurse make today go far beyond chemotherapy—it may help to positively impact your lifestyle and comfort during chemotherapy delivery, as well as the long-term health of the peripheral veins in your hands and arms. Depending on your treatment regimen, you may have the option to choose a chemotherapy delivery method that fits your lifestyle. *Ports*, compared to other central venous access devices, are more likely to permit you to go about your normal day-to-day activities, like showering, swimming, jogging and playing with your children. Ask your doctor or nurse about specific activities and the appropriate time to resume them.

Education

www.VEINS4LIFE.com is an interactive venue designed to help you learn:

- What vascular access devices are and how certain devices work
- The advantages and disadvantages of *ports* for chemotherapy delivery
- How your device choice may help to positively impact your lifestyle and comfort during chemotherapy delivery
- Patient experiences with *ports*
- Frequently asked questions
- Additional information for download [references]

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