Implanted Ports - A Guide to 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 treatment.

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 impact 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 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 be a benefit if you need 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.

Do your research

• Talk to your oncologist or nurse about your 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 chemotherapy
• Talk to other patients about their personal experience with ports
• Visit www.VEINS4LIFE.com

If you and your doctor decide a port is right for you...

Check healthcare coverage

• Medicare and Medicaid (U.S.) cover outpatient 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

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 procedure¹
• 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 vessel²
• 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 treatments are right for you. For important patient safety information, visit www.veins4life.com

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

Keep the lines of communication open

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

www.VEINS4LIFE.com

References: 1. Chernecky C. Phlebitis due to decreased pain, need for fewer needlesticks, and quicker blood withdrawals.²


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