



Getting your port placed

- Your doctor will refer you to a physician who specializes in *port* placement
- Insertion of a *port* is placed during a minor surgical procedure that typically doesn't require general anesthesia. This can 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.



www.VEINS4LIFE.com

References : 1. Chernecky C. *Satisfaction versus dissatisfaction with venous access devices in outpatient oncology: a pilot study.* *Oncology Nursing Forum* 2001;28(10):1613-1616. 2. Lamont JP, McCarty TM, Stephens JS, et al. *A randomized trial of valved vs nonvalved implantable ports for vascular access.* *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings* 2003;16(4):384-387. 3. Bard Access Systems: PowerPort® Implanted Ports: Patient Guide, 2009; 0717710 0903 4. RNAO Nursing Best Practice Guideline: Assessment and device selection for vascular access, 2004, p. 56-59

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When fighting 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 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 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.

Veins for Life



What every chemotherapy patient should know about ports

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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 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 your 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.



9 OUT OF 10 PATIENTS surveyed stated in one study that use of a *port* improved their quality of life due to decreased pain, need for fewer needle sticks, and quicker blood withdrawals.¹

If you are thinking about getting a *port*, you probably have questions about how it differs from other ways of receiving chemotherapy. For additional information, ask your doctor or nurse and visit www.VEINS4LIFE.com.



What are the advantages to having a port?

Implanted *ports* have many advantages over other methods of administering 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 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 treatments are right for you.

What is a port?

An implanted port (or port) is a small vascular access device (about the size of a quarter in diameter) with a hollow space inside that is sealed by a soft top. It is used to carry medications into the bloodstream and is placed in patients who need intermittent to long term I.V. therapy. The implanted port is connected to a small flexible tube called a catheter. A special needle is put in the soft top of the port so that medications and fluids can be given and blood samples withdrawn. In a minor surgical procedure, the port is implanted, which means it is placed completely beneath the skin, and the catheter is inserted inside a blood vessel.

An implanted *port* allows the doctor or nurse to deliver medications and fluids or withdraw blood samples without having to stick your arm veins directly with a needle. The implanted *port* allows the medications to be delivered directly into your heart to dilute and deliver the medication more quickly than if the medication was given in the veins in your arms or hands. An infusion or oncology nurse will use a special needle to deliver medication or take blood, and they may use an anesthetic cream to numb the skin to eliminate discomfort. The *port* may help to make these procedures more comfortable

for you, especially if your treatment requires frequent access to the bloodstream for medication delivery or blood withdrawal. Some *ports* can also be used for CECT or CT scans.³

Why would I consider a port?

If you are receiving a treatment such as chemotherapy, it may involve frequent injections or infusions of medication and other fluids directly into the bloodstream. The treatment may also require that blood samples be withdrawn. An implanted *port* may help to decrease the discomfort of these procedures.

Frequent needle sticks and certain medication can damage the peripheral veins in your arm or hand, making access more difficult over time.⁴

Why would I not consider a port?

You should not consider a *port* if you:

- Have or are suspected of having an infection
- Have a history of forming blood clots
- Have a body size that will not allow for proper *port* placement or *port* access
- Have had the *port* insertion site exposed to radiation
- Are not emotionally prepared to have an implanted medical device

A *port* is not for everyone. Talk to your doctor or nurse about these and other risks, and whether a *port* or another vascular access device is right for you. For important patient safety information, please visit www.VEINS4LIFE.com.