

# Caring for Your Implanted Port

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**This booklet will give you information about:**

- Implanted ports and how they are used
- How to prepare for your port
- What to expect during the procedure
- How to care for your port
- Important numbers to call if you need help



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# What is an implanted port?

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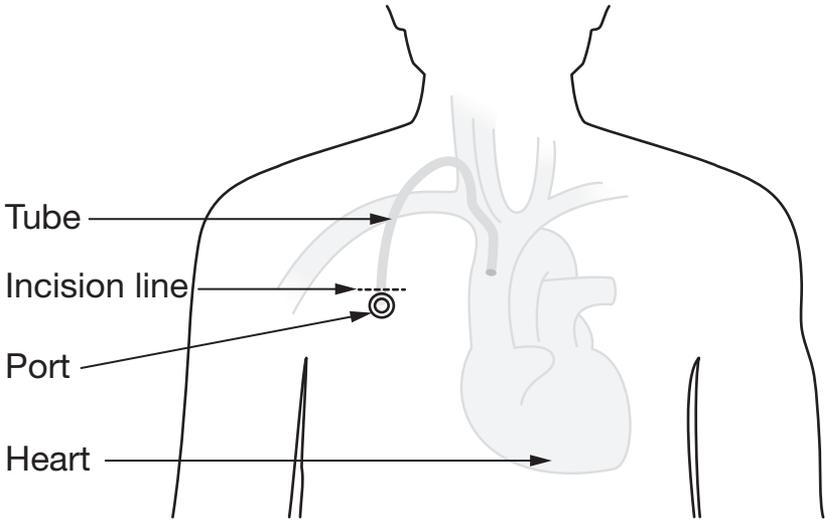
An implanted port (usually called a “port”) is a device used to inject liquids directly into your vein as part of your treatment. The port is connected to a thin tube that is inserted into a large vein that leads to your heart.

A port can be used to:

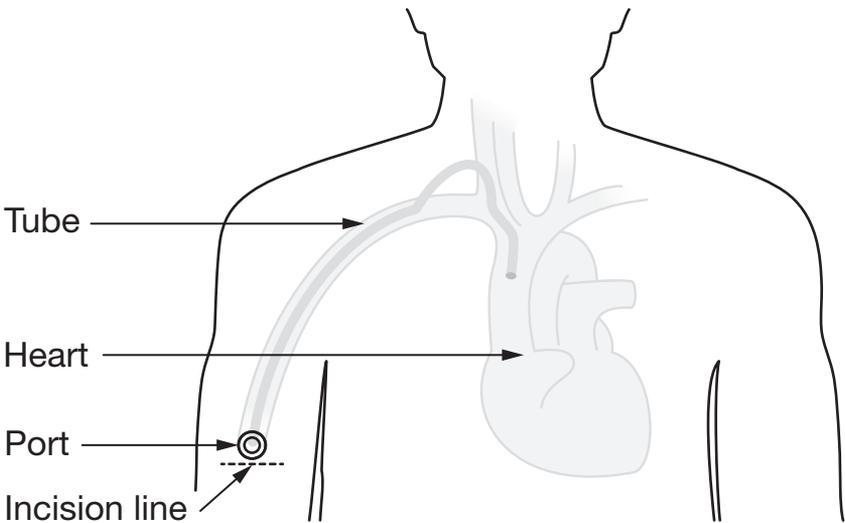
- Take blood samples.
- Give medications (drugs) including chemotherapy.
- Give fluids and blood products.

A port can be placed under the skin in your upper chest or above the elbow. It is about the size of a dollar coin with a soft top and is seen as a bump under your skin.

## Where a chest port is placed



## Where an arm port is placed in the arm

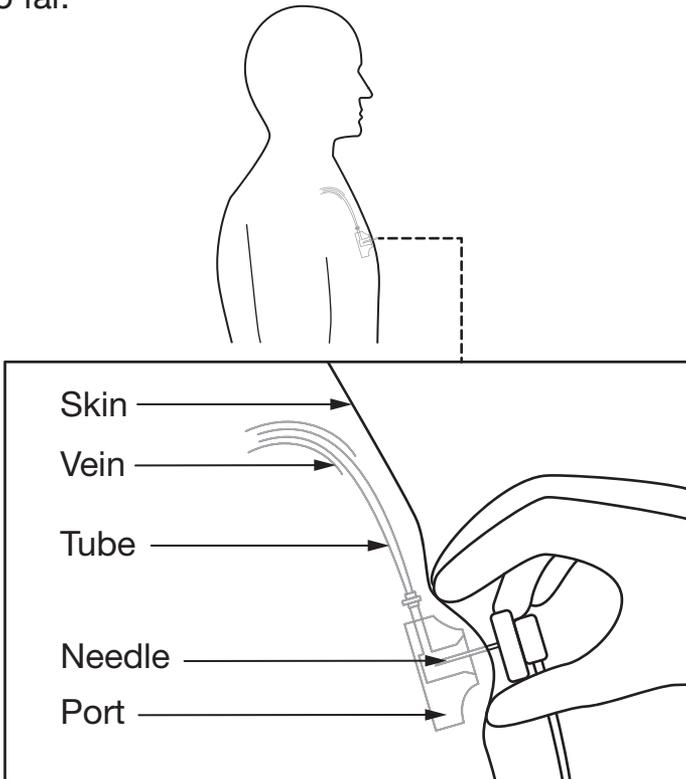


# How is a port used?

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A member of your health care team will use a special needle, called a Huber Needle, to take blood or to give medications (drugs) or fluids through your port.

- The needle will pass through your skin into the soft top of the port. You will feel a small prick when the needle is inserted.
- The medications (drugs) or other fluids will then travel through the tube into your vein.
- The top of the needle will sit on top of your skin. You do not have to worry about pushing the needle in too far.



# Learning about your port (for outpatients only)

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During a visit to the chemotherapy unit, the chemotherapy nurse will talk with you about the port insertion. The nurse will:

- Explain the procedure.
- Show you a model of the port.
- Teach you about the port.
- Answer your questions.

You will get a card with the time and date of your appointment. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call the chemotherapy unit at 416-480-5000 ext.6176. You must give at least 48 hour notice.

**The final decision about the placement of your port will be made with the doctor at the time of the procedure.**

# How to get ready for your procedure (for outpatients only)

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A nurse from Interventional Radiology will call you the day before your scheduled procedure.

On the day of your procedure, we ask that you:

- Bring your
  - health card (OHIP).
  - list of all medications you take regularly.

**Note:** During the procedure, you will be given local anesthetic to numb (not feel) the area.

# **Where to go on the day of your procedure (for outpatients only)**

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To check-in, please go to:

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre  
Department of Medical Imaging Reception  
M-Wing, Ground floor, Room 102 (MG-102)

**Please do not go to the Odette Cancer Centre.**

# What to expect during your procedure

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Your procedure will be done by an interventional radiologist (doctor who is specialized in a variety of procedures including port placements). They are located in Medical Imaging where your port placement will be done. The procedure will take 60 to 90 minutes.

- You will be asked to change into a gown.
- The doctor will go over the full procedure with you. They will explain the benefits and risks of the procedure and will answer any questions. The two of you will choose which side to use.
- You will be asked to sign a form that gives the doctor consent to do the procedure.
- A nurse will ask you some questions and start an intravenous (IV) in your arm. This IV will be used to give you any medication (drugs) that may be needed during the procedure.
- When it is time to do the procedure, you will be taken into a room that has x-ray and ultrasound machines that will be used during your procedure. You will be asked to lie on a table.

- The skin around the area where the port will be inserted will be cleaned. Sterile towels will be placed on you to keep everything clean. These towels will cover your entire body and face.
- The doctor will freeze your skin with a very small needle. They will make two small incisions to insert the port.
- After the port has been put in, both incisions will be sewed with dissolving stitches. The stitches are under the skin so you cannot see them. You will not need to remove the stitches.
- Thin paper tape strips will be placed over each incision.
- A dressing will be placed over the incision to prevent infection.
- You will receive a port information card (see card below). This card has important information about your port which your health care team will need. Please keep this card in your wallet.

**PowerPort\***  
IMPLANTABLE PORT

**BARD**  
ACCESS SYSTEMS

Single septum  
 Dual septum

Patient's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Doctor/ Doctor's Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Implant Site/ Implant Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notes \_\_\_\_\_

Palpation of three bumps on top and the triangular shape of the port help to identify the single lumen PowerPort\* device for power injection. Dual lumen ports have three palpation bumps on top of each septum to aid in identification of a power-injectable port.

**MR** (3T) **CT** (300psi)

- You will be taken to the Interventional Radiology recovery area. You may need a friend or family member to take you home.

**Note:** If you are booked for a chemotherapy treatment within 24 hours of your procedure, a needle will be inserted into your port so it can be used for your treatment.

## How to care for your port

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After the port has been inserted:

- In most cases, you may remove the outer dressing after 24 hours. **If you are having continuous infusion (chemotherapy given slowly over one or more days) through your port, please keep the dressing on. Talk to your health care team about when you can remove it.**
- You may shower normally after you remove the dressing.
- Underneath the outer dressing you will see small white tapes that cover the incisions –these are the Steri-Strips™. Do not remove the Steri-Strips™ – leave them on for 7 days.
- You can get these wet when showering. If the area gets wet, pat it dry (do not rub).
- The Steri-Strips™ usually fall off on their own. If they fall off before 7 days, do not worry. If they are still in place after 7 days you may gently peel them off.

- All stitches are under the skin so you should not notice them. They are dissolvable and will go away on their own after 4 to 6 weeks.
- You may have a small amount of swelling and bruising where the port has been placed. This is normal and should heal after 1 to 2 weeks.
- If you have any pain or soreness we recommend that you take 1 or 2 tablets of regular acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or extra strength acetaminophen (Extra Strength Tylenol™) every 4 hours as needed unless told otherwise.
- You should not take more than 8 tablets of extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol™) in any 24 hour period. Do not take acetaminophen if you are already on other medications that contain it (for example, Tylenol 1™, Tylenol 2™, Tylenol 3™, Percocet, Oxycocet).

Contact your health care team (see page 15) if you have:

- Redness at either incision (after the bruising has gone away).
- Drainage (leaking) from either incision.
- Pain that gets worse (keeping in mind that some discomfort is normal right after your procedure).
- Warmth around the incisions (the area becomes hot to the touch).
- A temperature of 38.3 °C (100.9 °F) or higher.



You may have your port for a few months to a year or more. Once the incision heals you can continue with your regular activities.

- A member of your health care team will flush the port after each use. This stops it from becoming blocked.
- They will also either remove the needle or keep it inserted. This depends on how often the port is used.

## **Ports without a needle inserted**

You do not need to cover your port and you may wash and bathe as normal. When your port is not in use, it needs to be flushed every 4 to 6 weeks. Talk to a member of your health care team about getting your port flushed regularly.

## **Ports with a needle inserted**

When a needle is inserted into your port, you must cover it with a dressing. Let a member of your health care team know right away if:

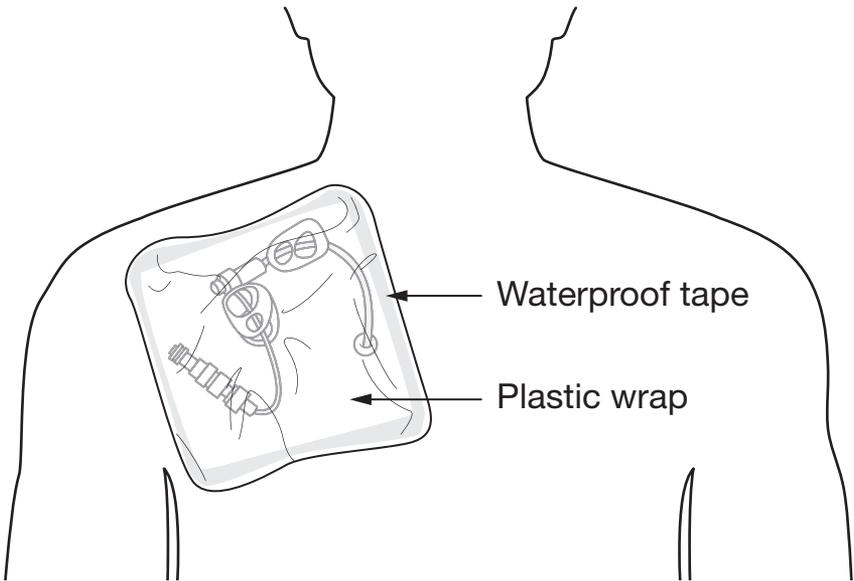
- The needle slips out or moves.
- You have swelling, bruising or soreness near the area.
- The dressing gets wet or dirty.

# How to keep your port with a needle inserted dry when showering or bathing

Shower, wash, or bathe with the port with a needle inserted as needed. It is important to cover the whole port, needle and dressings when showering or bathing.

Follow these steps to help keep your port dry:

- Cover the whole dressing with clear plastic wrap.
- Use waterproof tape on all sides of the plastic wrap to stop water from getting in. You can buy waterproof tape at your pharmacy.
- After your shower, remove the plastic wrap. Look carefully at the dressing to make sure that it is dry.



Contact your health care team if the dressing gets soaked (very wet). See page 15.



# When your treatment is done

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After you have finished your treatment you will have your port flushed every 4 to 6 weeks by coming into the clinic or by your home nursing service. If you do not have a future treatment planned, ask your doctor when your port can be removed.

# When to contact your health care team

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Contact your health care team if:

- You have a fever of 38.3°C (100.9°F) or more.
- You have chills or feel very unwell.
- The area around your port is red, sore, painful or you have swelling.
- The area around the needle is leaking, has drainage or blood.
- You have any problems with your port.

# Important numbers to call if you need help



If you have home nursing services from the Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN) Home and Community Care (formally the CCAC), please call them directly.

If you do not have home nursing service, call the Odette Cancer Centre at 416-480-5000:

Monday to Friday from \_\_\_\_am to \_\_\_\_pm,

- Please call extension \_\_\_\_\_.

After hours, weekends, and statutory holidays,

- Follow the instructions on the recorded message which will give you information about how to help.

**If you go to an emergency department or urgent care centre bring your port information card (see page 9) with you.**







**Odette Cancer Centre**  
2075 Bayview Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 3M5  
[sunnybrook.ca/odette](https://sunnybrook.ca/odette)

