

## Implantation of a central venous access system (portacath)

A portacath **is implanted for patients requiring continuous chemotherapy, antibiotic, etc. treatment.** When used appropriately, a portacath is safe, easy, and invisible. It can be in place for the duration of the whole treatment, unless the physician decides otherwise.

### Procedure

A portacath is a small silicon portal with a metal bottom. It is inserted in an operating room **under local anaesthesia, usually below the right collar bone.** A polyurethane catheter runs from the silicone case to the central vein, making regular infusions easier. The portacath is accessed using a so-called Huber needle.

### Wound care

The bandage on the wound can be removed after 24 hours, after which you may shower. You may go to sauna after one week. The **wound usually has absorbable sutures.**

### Treatment of pain

The area around the portacath may be swollen, sore, and aching. **Painkillers and an ice pack reduce the swelling and pain after the operation. You are recommended to take pain killers regularly for 1–4 days** and after that when necessary:

Paracetamol

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Anti-inflammatory

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### Use of the portacath

The portacath **may be used immediately after implantation and it can be used to administer all medication, blood-based products, and nutrient solutions using a Huber needle.** Even blood tests can be taken via the portacath. The Huber needle can be removed after every use, but it can be left in place with the attached short tube, if the portacath is used several times a day. The needle stays in place with a compression bandage and tape. The area is protected with a plastic dressing (Tegaderm) when showering. The needle is changed at least once a week. The Huber needle is removed when you leave the hospital.

One portacath can be punctured up to 1000–2000 times. If your portacath is not used continuously, it must be flushed once a month. The nursing staff will provide you with more information when the issue becomes relevant.

The most common portacath contains titanium. If you have an allergic hypersensitivity to titanium, inform the nursing staff. A titanic portacath does not prevent you from having an MRI examination (Magnetic Resonance Imaging).

### Contact us

Contact the hospital, if after a week you are still experience swelling, pain, redness or warmth of skin around your portacath, or if you get fever.

Day Surgery Unit A2 on working days from 07.00–17.00 tel. **(06) 323 1552**,

Emergency Department at other times tel. **(06) 323 1311**

Oncology Outpatient Clinic on working days tel. **(06) 323 2910**, or

Your own health centre or occupational health centre

**We wish you happy healing!**