

Temporary Apheresis Catheters

What is an apheresis catheter (central line), and why do I need it?

An apheresis catheter (central line) is a thin, long flexible tube that is inserted into a vein in the neck. Typically, a temporary apheresis catheter is often used for giving apheresis treatments.

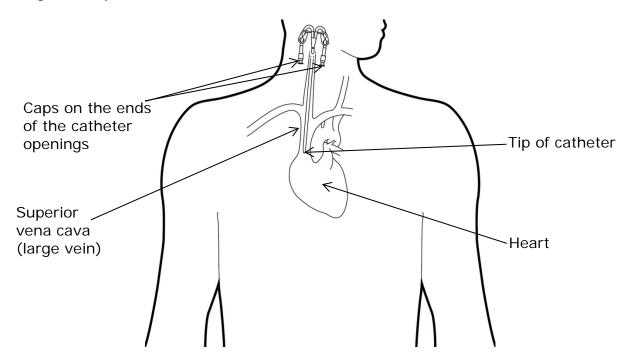
When we collect stem cells by a process called apheresis from a donor, sometimes the donor has veins that are too small for us to collect the cells through an intravenous (IV) site in their arm. For these donors, we need a temporary apheresis catheter for the stem cell collection. To prevent possible problems, donors with temporary apheresis catheters stay in the hospital while this line is in.

How is the catheter inserted?

The catheter is inserted in the Radiology Department. This takes about 30 to 60 minutes.

An IV will be put into your arm. You may be given medicine to help you relax and you may feel drowsy. The skin on your neck will be cleaned with a special antibacterial soap. A numbing medicine will be given under the skin on your neck to decrease any discomfort.

The doctor makes a small opening in the neck area where the catheter will enter the vein. The catheter is passed through this hole and then gently threaded until the tip is near your heart in the large vein called the superior vena cava. The opening at your neck will be closed and held together by stitches.



After the catheter is in, it will be checked to make sure it is in the right position. A dressing will be placed over the site.

The catheter has two openings. One opening is to remove the blood from your body and the other opening is where the blood is returned to your body after the stem cells were removed during apheresis. These catheter openings will be flushed with a medication (such as Heparin or Citrate) to keep them from forming a blood clot. Caps will be placed on the ends to keep them covered.

What are the risks of an apheresis catheter?

The biggest risk with having a catheter is getting an infection. Infections can be caused by bacteria getting into your blood. Infections from catheters can be a serious problem and can lead to severe illness.

Other possible risks include:

- a blood clot
- breaking, bending or moving of your catheter
- leaking of medicine outside your vein

How can I help prevent catheter associated infections?

- ✓ Wash your hands. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Clean your hands before and after you touch the catheter or the area around it.
- ✓ If the dressing becomes loose or falls off, let your nurse know right away so that it can be changed.
- ✓ Let your nurse know if you feel unwell, feel flushed or have chills.
- ✓ Avoid any activities that may cause the catheter to be tugged on, pulled out or moved.
- ✓ Do not let the catheter become wet.

What should I expect after the apheresis catheter is in?

You may have some bruising, swelling and tenderness where the catheter was put in. This should go away after 1 to 2 days. You may have some mild discomfort where the catheter was placed. Let your nurse know if you have any pain or soreness.

How is the apheresis catheter removed?

When your catheter is ready to be removed, you will be placed in a flat position. The stitches around your catheter will be taken out. You will be asked to take a deep breath and hold it for a few seconds while the catheter is being pulled out, then you will be able to breathe normally. This should not hurt. Pressure will be applied until bleeding has stopped. After the catheter is removed you will need to stay for 30 minutes.

What do I do after the apheresis catheter is removed?

A dressing will be placed over the site or wound. If there is no bleeding, you may remove the dressing after 24 hours and put a Band-Aid® over it. You may take a shower after 24 hours if there is no bleeding and a scab over the wound.

Insertion and removal of the catheter often causes slight irritation and bleeding at the site such as:

- Minor tenderness that lasts up to 1 week.
- Some minor oozing from the wound.
- Some bruising near the wound.
- A lump near the wound that is the size of a small marble and lasts up to 6 weeks.

These signs are normal and you DO NOT need medical help.

Call the hematology team for help if:

- There is liquid or pus coming from the wound.
- You break the skin around the wound.
- You have a fever of 38°C (100°F) or chills.
- You have pain, redness or swelling at the wound.
- The wound is bleeding. If this happens, put pressure on the wound and lie flat until the doctor on-call tells you what to do next.
- You have any questions or concerns.

Call 911 or go the emergency room if you:

- Have chest pain or discomfort.
- Suddenly feel short of breath (have trouble breathing).