

## **When your baby needs an intravenous**

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### **What is an intravenous or IV?**

An intravenous is a thin, plastic tube that is put into a vein. The tube or “catheter” is connected to a bag of fluid hanging above the baby. The tubing from the fluid bag runs through a machine called an IV pump. The pump controls the flow of the fluid, so that only the correct amount of fluid is given to your baby. Please do not touch the IV pump.

### **Why does my baby need an IV?**

Through the intravenous, your baby may be given:

- fluids with water and sugar
- nutrients such as protein, fats, sugars, vitamins and minerals
- medications such as antibiotics

Sometimes a special IV is needed, such as:

- Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) inserted by the Neonatal staff
- Percutaneous Cutdown Catheter (PCC) inserted by a pediatric surgeon
- Central Venous Line (CVL) or Broviac Catheter inserted by a pediatric surgeon

If your baby needs a special IV, you will need to sign a consent form. A pediatric surgeon, neonatal doctor, nurse practitioner or specially trained nurse will put in these special IVs.

### **Where do you put the IV?**

The IV can be started in a vein in your baby's:

- hand or arm
- foot or leg
- scalp

If the IV is put into the scalp, your baby's hair may need to be shaved. Shaving makes it easier to see the vein. Also the tape holding the IV in place needs to stick to the baby's skin. To protect the IV, your baby's arm or leg may be placed on a small board.

## **Does the IV hurt my baby?**

When the IV is put in, it may hurt your baby. We may be able to give your baby a little sucrose water to decrease the pain, if your baby is being fed. A very small, sharp needle is used to put in the IV. Once the IV is in place, it does not hurt any more.

## **Can I be with my baby when the IV is put in?**

If your baby needs a PICC or a line inserted by a surgeon, you will be asked to leave while it is done. If your baby needs a regular IV, you can decide whether to stay or leave. Watching this could make you feel uncomfortable.

Also, there is not much room near your baby as two members of the health care team usually work together to start the IV. You may stay go to the quiet lounge at the end of the main hallway or the family lounge outside the main entrance to NICU.

You can return to your baby right after the IV is put in. If your baby's health is stable, you may be able to hold your baby. Your baby's nurse will tell you if you can hold your baby.

## **How long will my baby need an IV?**

Your baby will have an IV until the medications are no longer needed and your baby is eating well.

## **Why does the IV get changed?**

Sometimes your baby's IV will be taken out and another IV will be put in. Your baby has small, fragile veins. The IV may need to be changed when:

- the IV is leaking, blocked or pulled out
- the baby's skin is puffy, swollen or red

**If you have any questions about your baby's IV,  
please talk with your baby's nurse or doctor.**