

Living with your Tunneled Catheter

- problems and what to do

- ✓ Always wash your hands before you do anything with your Tunneled Catheter, IV tubing or dressing.
- ✓ Gloves are worn if you have a cut, a rash or an infection on your hands.
- ✓ When cleaning with an alcohol wipe or antiseptic swab, rub well with friction for 15 seconds. Allow to dry.
- ✓ As you become more independent with your Tunneled Catheter care, here are some suggestions to help you if you run into problems.
- ✓ If you are not sure about what to do or have a concern, please call your hospital nurse or visiting nurse.

Nurse's name and phone number: _____

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
Wet around the cap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to moisture, such as a shower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry off with an alcohol wipe/antiseptic swab.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cap is loose. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure all clamps are closed. 2. Clean the connection between cap and catheter. 3. Put a new cap. 4. Call your nurse.
Cap falls off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cap is not tight, or • Cap has cracked. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure all clamps are closed. 2. Clean the end of the catheter. 3. Put on a new cap. 5. Call your nurse.

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p>Sluggish to flush.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catheter may be kinked or twisted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and straighten any kinks or twists. You may have to check under the dressing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up of blood or medication inside the catheter. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flush well in between medications and when capping off. 2. You may need to flush with more solution or more often. 3. Call your nurse.
<p>When you are flushing, you cannot push the solution in. Do not force the flush you may rupture the Catheter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a kink or a twist in the catheter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and straighten any kinks and/or twists. • Roll the tubing where the catheter was clamped. • You may need to check under the dressing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip of the catheter is resting against the vein. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try changing your position, sit up, lie down, move your head. 2. Take a deep breath and lift your arms and then try again.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your catheter may be blocked or out of position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your nurse. • You may need to come to the hospital to unblock.

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p>The IV is not running well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clamps on the IV tubing may be closed or there is a pump problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the entire system.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip of the catheter is resting against the veins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try changing your position, sit up, lie down, move your head. • Take a deep breath and lift your arms and then try again.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The catheter may be kinked or twisted. You may have to check under the dressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and straighten any kinks or twists. • Call your nurse.
<p>Leaking at the site or under the dressing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The catheter may have a crack in it. • The catheter may be broken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clamp off catheter. • Stop infusion and cap off catheter. • Cover with sterile gauze, or clean dressing or cloth. • Immediately call and go to the hospital where your catheter was inserted or to emergency.

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p>At the site where the catheter leaves your skin or along the path of the catheter/ vein you notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redness • swelling • drainage • tenderness • soreness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catheter problems related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infection • inflammation • irritation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your nurse.
<p>Fever, chills, sweating</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be an infection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your nurse or doctor right away.
<p>Swelling of the arm, neck or face, on the side that the catheter is located.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catheter may be causing a problem with your venous system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to Emergency.

Do not use force to flush the catheter.

When using the clamp, clamp in different spots to prevent weakness in one area.