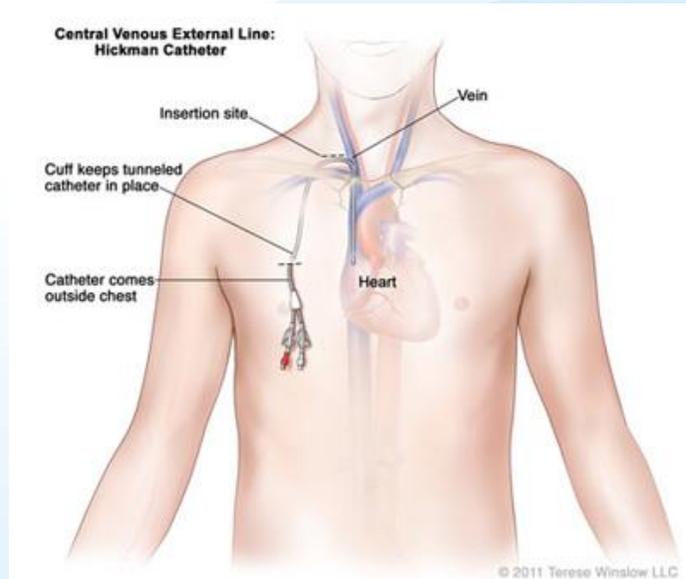




## What is a Hickman line?

A **Hickman line** is a central venous catheter most often used for the administration of chemotherapy or other medications, as well as for the withdrawal of blood for analysis. Some types are used mainly for the purpose of apheresis or dialysis.

The illustration below shows the Hickman line, and where it enters the body



## Who will care for it?

While you are in hospital, the nursing staff will have been looking after your Hickman line. This would have involved

- Cleaning the exit site and applying a new dressing weekly
- Flushing the line weekly to prevent blocking when it is not in use

## Now you are at home

The nurse in charge of your care will call at your home to flush your line. They will be experienced in how to care for your Hickman line and will have the equipment needed for the first flush. You may still need to receive medication through your Hickman line once you are at home.

## Storage of Medicines at Home

If possible, please would you provide a lidded plastic box to store your medicines or equipment safely.

## Infection Control - Hygiene at Home

Please would you provide liquid soap and hand washing facilities with paper towels/ kitchen roll for the nurse to use.

## How will I know if something is wrong?

Sometimes problems can occur while you have a Hickman line. If you suspect something is wrong, or if you have any of the following, contact the Community Care Team (CCT) or Out of Hours (OOH)

- If you have a temperature above 37.5c, fever, chills or feel generally unwell. This could be the beginning of an infection
- Oozing from around the line
- Cracks or leaks in the line
- Pain, redness or swelling around the site, in your neck or arm – this could be a sign that the line tip has moved and a blood clot has formed in one of the veins
- If your Hickman line becomes dislodged
- If dressings become loose or detached

## Frequently asked questions

### Can I have a bath or a shower and swim?

As a general rule, we encourage people with Hickman lines to take a shower rather than a bath because of the risk of infection if the Hickman line is submerged in bathwater. Avoid swimming.

### Can I lead a normal social life?

Having a Hickman line in place should not interfere with your social life. However, having treatment may mean that you do not feel like certain social activities immediately after treatment or if your blood counts are low. Your nurse or doctor will give you more specific information.

### Can I play sports?

Sports such as tennis and golf or vigorous gym exercises are discouraged. There is a risk that your Hickman line could become dislodged because of excessive upper body movement. However, there are many other pursuits which are acceptable. If in doubt ask your nurse or doctor.

## Useful telephone numbers

.....CCT

8am to 5pm Tel: .....

Out of Hours District Nurses Tel: 01244 385306