

# Non-tunneled Hemodialysis Catheter

# Non-tunneled Hemodialysis Catheter

## What is a non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter?

- A non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter is a plastic tube used for hemodialysis treatment.
- An interventional radiologist (doctor who specializes in X-rays) will put the catheter into a large vein in your neck or chest. Sometimes the catheter may need to be placed into a large vein in your leg or groin.
- You will have 2 stitches where the catheter is put in, to hold it in place. If these stitches come out, a nurse or doctor in the Dialysis Unit will replace them.
- The catheter tube has 2 lumens (tubes) coming from it.
  - › 1 lumen carries blood from your body through tubing connected to the dialysis machine.
  - › The other lumen carries clean blood from the dialysis machine back into your body.

## **Why do I need a non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter?**

You may need a non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter while you are waiting for:

- › An arteriovenous fistula
- › A peritoneal dialysis catheter
- › A tunneled catheter

## **How long can a non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter stay in place?**

A non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter can stay in place for as long as you need it.

## **How is the non-tunneled hemodialysis catheter inserted?**

- You will be taken to the hemodialysis treatment room or the Diagnostic Imaging (X-ray) Department.
- You will be asked to lie flat on an exam table.
- Sterile (very clean) cloths will be placed over your face and body during the procedure.
- You will be given a local anesthetic (numbing medication) to freeze the area. You will be awake during the procedure.

## **What will happen after the procedure?**

- You may have discomfort or pain in the area where the catheter was placed. Please tell the nurse if you have any discomfort. You may be given medication to help with this, if needed.
- An X-ray will be done to make sure the catheter is in the right place.
- After the X-ray, your catheter can be used right away for dialysis treatment, if needed.
- There will be a sterile dressing covering the catheter site. It will be changed before each dialysis treatment and as needed.

## **How to care for your catheter:**

- Keep the dressing dry and in one piece at all times.

**If the dressing gets wet or falls off, call the Hemodialysis Unit right away.**

- › **Phone:** 902-473-7544
- › **Hours:** 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.,  
Monday to Saturday

**If you cannot reach the Unit, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

- **Do not** take tub baths if your catheter is in your leg or groin.
- **Do not** swim or soak in a hot tub.

- If your catheter is in your neck or chest, take tub baths instead of showers.
- If your catheter is in your neck, ask someone to help wash your hair:
  1. Place 2 layers of plastic wrap over the dressing.
  2. Secure the plastic wrap with tape.
  3. Place a towel around your neck.
  4. Use the sink to wash your hair.
- **Do not** use safety pins near the catheter.
- **Do not** remove the dressing.
- **Do not** exercise your upper body too much.
  - › **Do not** do contact sports or activities where you move your upper body (like golf or basketball).
  - › Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have questions about this.

**Call the Hemodialysis Unit or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have:**

- › Pain or swelling around your catheter
- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F) or chills
- › Bleeding or drainage through the dressing
- › A loose dressing
- › **Phone:** 902-473-7544
- › Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday to Saturday

**If your catheter falls out:**

1. Bear down (like you are about to poop) and hold your breath until you can cover the exit site (the spot where the catheter comes out of your body) with gauze, a clean cloth, or your hand.
2. Keep putting pressure on the exit site.
3. Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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