

# Getting Chemotherapy by an Elastomeric Infusion Pump

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## What is an Elastomeric infusion pump?

An elastomeric infusion pump is a lightweight disposable pump that may be used to give you medications. It is made of very hard plastic and looks like a baby bottle. This pump lets you receive medications safely and comfortably in your own home.

## What types of drugs can be given by an infusion pump?

Many different medications can be given safely through an infusion pump, including some types of chemotherapy.

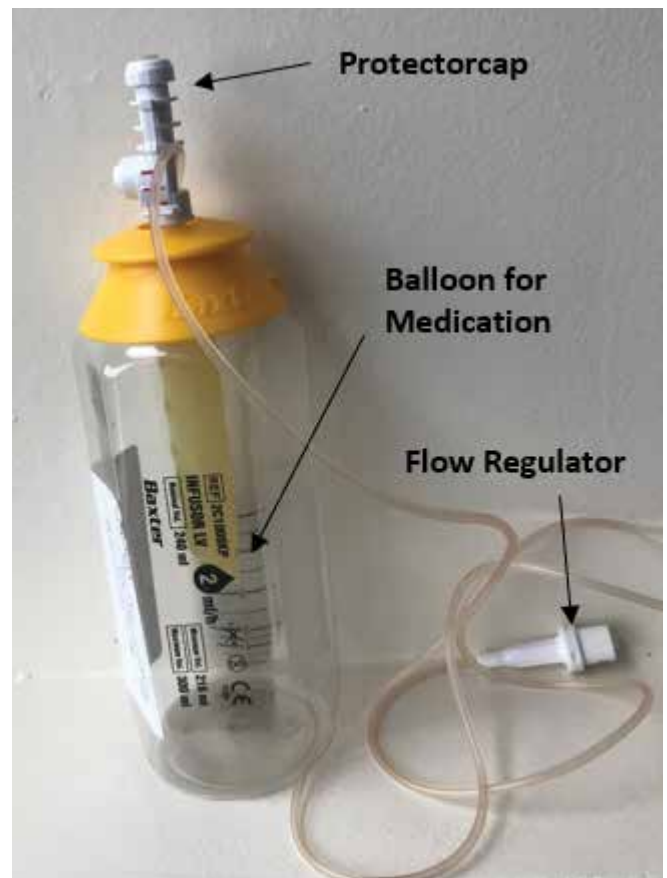
## How does the infusion pump work?

The pharmacist chooses a pump that will give you your chemotherapy over a specific time period, called an infusion rate. There is a balloon inside the bottle that is filled with your drug.

The balloon gently pushes the drug through the tubing into your IV. The pump runs at a set rate. It does not need to be programmed and it does not need batteries.

The infusion pump has several parts:

The small white section on the tubing is called a flow regulator. Based on temperature, it controls how fast your drug comes out. The warmer the flow regulator, the faster the drug infuses. Keep it taped against your skin at all times as this will keep the flow regulator at the ideal temperature.



## Will I still have to come to the hospital?

Yes, you will have to come to the hospital to have your infusion started. A nurse will connect the pump to your IV. Instead of waiting in the hospital during the infusion, you may go home or do other activities.

Options for disconnection will be discussed with you by your nurse. You may be taught how to disconnect your pump at home yourself, VON may come to your home to disconnect it, or you will be given an appointment to have your pump disconnected at the hospital.

## How do I carry the pump?

- The flow regulator should be at the same level as the pump. Many patients find carrying the pump at waist level to be comfortable.
- You can carry your pump in the carrying pouch provided to you.
- The pump will run in any position, including upside-down or sideways.
- Keep the pump out of direct sunlight, heat (like near the stove), or cold.



## How do I take care of the pump?

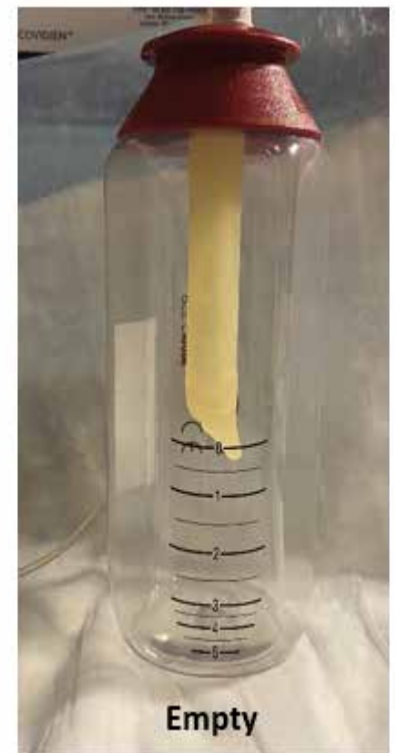
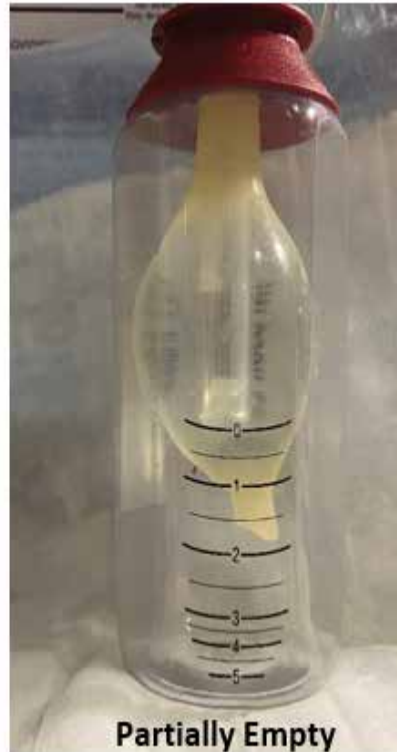
- Always keep the flow regulator taped to your skin.
- Make sure that the tubing is not kinked, knotted or bent and that the clamps on your tubing are open.
- While having an infusion you may do your regular activities, such as walking, driving a car, or eating.
- Do not play sports that increase the risk of bumping or jarring the pump, such as contact sports or sports where you may fall down.

## Can I bathe or shower with the pump?

No, it is best to have sponge baths while you have your pump connected. It is important to keep the pump out of the water and avoid it getting too hot.

## How will I know when the pump is empty?

Check the balloon inside of the pump throughout the day. The balloon should get smaller over time. When the balloon inside the bottle is empty, you will be able to see small bumps on the stem. The tail of the balloon will be at the zero mark when empty. Your nurse will tell you the approximate amount of time the drug should run for and when to expect the bottle to be empty.



### What should I do if I think the pump is not running?

- Check to see that the tubing is not kinked or bent.
- Check to see that the clamps are open.
- Call your cancer care team for instructions during daytime hours for further instruction.

### What should I do if my gripper needle comes out, if the pump leaks or if my tubing becomes disconnected?

- Stop the infusion by closing the clamp on your tubing.
- If any drug has spilled, follow the instructions in the [How to Clean Up a Chemo Spill at Home](#) brochure.
- If this happens during the day, call your cancer care team for instructions.
- If this happens in the evening or on a weekend, go to your closest Emergency Department.

### Signs of Infection

Check your IV site regularly for signs of infection:

- Is the skin hot or warm to touch?
- Is there redness, swelling, drainage or pain?
- Do you have fever, chills, shaking, feeling that your heart is beating quickly at rest, or do you feel unwell for an unknown reason?

- If so, stop the infusion by closing the clamp on the tubing.
  - › If this happens during the day, call your cancer care team for instructions
  - › If this happens in the evening or on a weekend, go to your closest Emergency Department.

**What if I need help with the pump at home?**

If you have questions about the pump, call your cancer care team:

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### Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/cancer>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider. The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.