

Tunneled Hemodialysis Catheter

Notes:

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

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

Prepared by: Interventional Radiology
Designed and Managed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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To be reviewed July 2028 or sooner, if needed.
Learn more: <https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>

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 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.

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

- 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 activities or sports.

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

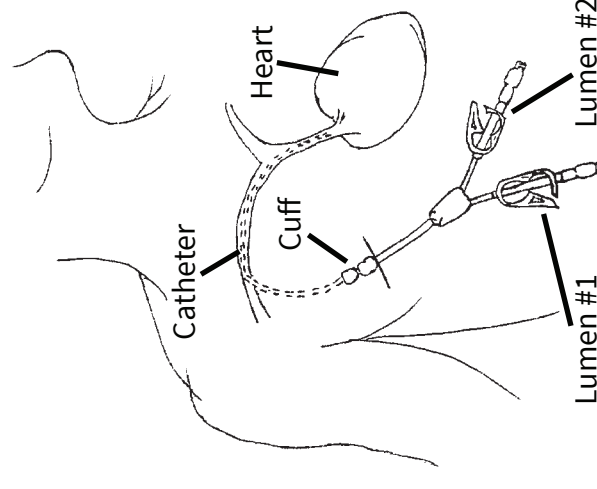
Tunneled Hemodialysis Catheter

What is a tunneled hemodialysis catheter?

- A 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 chest. The catheter tip leads into your heart.
- 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.



- The catheter has a cuff to help keep it in place.
- You may have a stitch and/or Steri-Strips™ at 2 spots:
 - › 1 on your neck at the insertion site (where the catheter enters)
 - › 1 on your chest at the exit site (where the catheter comes out).
- Your hemodialysis nurse will remove the stitch and/or Steri-Strips™ at the insertion site in about 7 to 10 days. The stitch at the exit site will usually be removed in about 6 weeks.

Why do I need a tunneled hemodialysis catheter?

- You may need a tunneled hemodialysis catheter when hemodialysis is needed for a long period of time.
- You may also need this catheter while you are waiting for an arteriovenous fistula or a peritoneal dialysis catheter.

How long can a tunneled hemodialysis catheter stay in place?

A tunneled hemodialysis catheter can stay in place for as long as needed. It can stay in place for years if it is working well.

- There will be a sterile dressing covering the insertion site and exit site.
- If you had sedation during the procedure, **you must have a responsible adult take you home by car or taxi after the procedure and stay with you overnight.**
- **Do not drive** for 24 hours (1 day) after your procedure.

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** swim, soak in a hot tub, or take a shower. You may take tub baths. Be careful not to get your dressing wet.

- The doctor may give you sedation (medication to help you relax).

- 2 small incisions (cuts) will be made:

- › 1 in your lower neck (insertion site)
 - › 1 in your upper chest (exit site)

- You may feel pressure in the area where the catheter is being inserted.

- An X-ray will be done to make sure the catheter is in the right place.

What will happen after the procedure?

- If you are an outpatient and will be going home later that day:

- › A nurse will monitor you for 1 to 2 hours after your procedure.

- If you are an inpatient and will be staying overnight at the hospital:

- › You will go back to your room on the nursing unit for monitoring.

- A nurse will check your blood pressure, heart rate, and puncture sites often.

- You may eat and drink as usual.

- You may have pain in the area where the catheter was placed. Please tell the nurse if you have any pain. You may be given medication to help with this.

Where is the procedure done?

☐ Victoria General (VG) site

- › Go to the 4th floor of the Victoria Building and register in the Medical Day Unit.

or

☐ Halifax Infirmary

- › Go to the 3rd floor and register at the Diagnostic Imaging registration desk.

Bring your provincial health card with you.

How long will I be at the hospital?

- Please plan to be at the hospital for 4 hours for the full appointment.
- The actual catheter insertion takes about 30 to 60 minutes.
- After the procedure, you will recover in the Medical Day Unit or recovery area for about 2 hours.

How do I get ready?

- Tell your doctor in the Dialysis Unit if you are taking blood thinner medication (like warfarin). You may need to stop taking it a few days before the procedure.
- You will need to have blood tests a few days before the procedure. Your doctor will order these tests for you.
- A nurse will call you with instructions 1 to 2 days before the procedure. They will tell you if you need to stop taking any medications.
- Tell your referring doctor and the radiologist if you are pregnant.
- Tell your referring doctor and the radiologist if you have an allergy to X-ray contrast (dye).
- **Do not** eat any solid food after midnight the night before your procedure.
- You may drink clear fluids after midnight.

The morning of the procedure:

- **Do not** eat breakfast.
- If you have diabetes, drink juice.
- Take your medications as usual, except for diabetes and/or blood thinner medications, unless told otherwise.

- Bring your medication(s) and insulin with you to take after the procedure.
- Bring all of your medication(s) to the hospital with you. This includes prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements.
- **You must have a responsible adult take you home by car or taxi. You cannot drive yourself. They must also stay with you overnight after your procedure. This is for your safety.**

How is the tunneled hemodialysis catheter put in?

- The doctor will explain the procedure to you and then ask you to sign a consent form.
- You will be taken to the Diagnostic Imaging (X-ray) Department.
- You will be asked to lie flat on an exam table.
- An intravenous (I.V.) tube will be put into a vein in your arm using a needle.
- 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.