

Implanted Vascular Access Device (IVAD or Port)

My surgery is at:

Hospital: _____

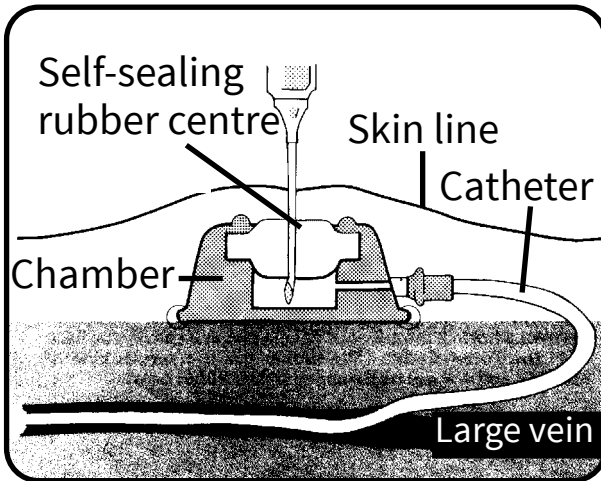
Date: _____

Time: _____

Implanted Vascular Access Device (IVAD or Port)

What is an implanted vascular access device (IVAD)?

- An IVAD is a small device placed in a vein just above your heart. It is used to give you intravenous (I.V.) medications and to take blood samples. It is also called a port or a port-a-cath.
- Your IVAD will be inserted (put in) during surgery.



An IVAD has 2 parts:

1. A small port with a self-sealing rubber centre
 - › The centre is used for repeated punctures from a special needle called a gripper or a non-coring needle.

2. A catheter (thin, flexible tube) attached to the port
 - › The catheter tip is put into a vein just above your heart.

What are the benefits of using an IVAD?

- It can be used give you I.V. medications and to take blood samples.
- It can stay in place for 5 years or more.
- You can use your arms as usual to do your daily activities.
- The IVAD does not need special care when it is not being used.

How does an IVAD work?

- A needle is used to give I.V. infusions through your skin into the IVAD's rubber centre. The medication or fluid goes through the needle into the IVAD, through the catheter, and into your blood.

How should I get ready for my surgery?

- **Do not eat or drink after midnight the night before your appointment.**
- Your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) will go over your medications with you. This includes puffers, patches, injections, creams, and over-the-counter or herbal products.

- You must follow certain instructions for taking some medications (like blood thinners) before your surgery. Your primary health care provider will tell you how to take your medications, if needed.
- If you are an outpatient (not a current hospital patient), follow your primary health care provider's instructions for when to come to the hospital for your surgery.

How will my IVAD be inserted?

- We will tell you where your surgery will be done. For example, in the Interventional Radiology Department or in the Operating Room (O.R.).
- We will use a local anesthetic (freezing) on the area where your IVAD will be put in so you will not feel any pain. You will be awake during the surgery.
- The surgeon may give you medication to help you relax.
- The surgeon will make 2 small incisions (cuts) in your upper chest and place the IVAD under your skin below your collarbone.
- After the IVAD is placed, you will have an X-ray to make sure it is in the right place.
- Your appointment will take about 1 hour.

What will happen after surgery?

- If you are an outpatient, we will watch you closely for about 1 hour before you can go home.
- **Do not drive. You must have a responsible adult take you home.**
- If you need a follow-up appointment, call your primary health care provider.

At home

- The area around your IVAD may be bruised, swollen, and tender for a few days. This is common. It should go away in about 7 days (1 week).
- You will have a dressing over the incisions. You may take the dressing off after 48 hours (2 days). The Steri-Strips™ (strong pieces of tape) on the incisions will fall off on their own in 7 to 10 days.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions for showering and bathing.
- As long as your surgeon says it is OK, you can do your usual activities.
- Your IVAD can be used right away unless you have a lot of bruising or swelling. Your surgeon or nurse will let you know when it is ready to be used before you leave the hospital.

Flushing your IVAD

- Your IVAD must be flushed every 4 weeks to keep the catheter open. Your primary health care provider will arrange for this.

Identification (ID) card and MedicAlert®

- You will be given an ID card before you leave the hospital. It will list your type of IVAD with the date it was placed. This information will help if you need to see a doctor who does not know you. **Always keep this card with you.**
- Ask for a MedicAlert® application before you leave the hospital. **Wear a MedicAlert® bracelet or necklace at all times.**



Watch for signs of infection. Call your primary health care provider if you have any of these symptoms of infection:

- › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- › Green or yellow-beige drainage from the incision site(s)
- › Redness or pain near where the IVAD was put in

If you cannot reach your primary health care provider, call 811 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

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 this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

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

Prepared by: Minor Procedures, QE II

Illustrations by: Smith Industries Medical Systems;
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To be reviewed August 2027 or sooner, if needed.