

# Southernex



Imaging Group Ltd

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## HICKMAN CATHETER INSERTION

### Patient Information

Your doctor has asked for you to have a Hickman catheter inserted. We would like to make your visit to us as easy and comfortable as possible - this brochure gives some information to help prepare you for your procedure.

#### **What is a Hickman catheter?**

A Hickman catheter is a white, silicone tube which allows ready access to your veins and is basically like a long term I.V. cannula (drip).

The catheter is positioned so that its tip is in the largest veins of your body to ensure that it will work well for the longest possible time. To get to this area, the catheter is typically placed in the chest region.

#### **What happens before the procedure?**

You will be given instructions regarding the time of your appointment and any necessary preparations. Prior to your appointment you should have a thorough shower with the antiseptic wash provided. You should not drive yourself - you will need someone to drive you home after the procedure.

You will be asked not to eat anything for 6 hours prior to the appointment although you may have sips of water to keep your mouth moist. You should take your usual medications with a small amount of water. Please notify us if you are taking aspirin, heparin, Coumadin, Marevan or warfarin tablets. We will have checked your blood counts with your referring doctor but feel free to notify us if you know that these counts (particularly your platelet count) are low.

Upon admission you will be allocated a bed and prepared for your procedure which will be performed in the Radiology Department.

## **What happens during the procedure?**

You will be taken to the radiology procedure room and asked to lie on a bed which has x-ray equipment over it. This is used to monitor the position of the device during insertion. In addition, an ultrasound machine is used to allow ready access into the chosen vein. The combination of the ultrasound and x-ray machines makes the procedure very safe.

You will be given intravenous sedation which will make you calm and relaxed during the procedure. The insertion site will be made numb by two tiny injections of local anaesthetic. The combination of intravenous sedation to calm you plus local anaesthetic to numb the area means that you will be relaxed and you won't feel any pain.

The Hickman catheter runs under the skin from below the collarbone up to the access vein, which is just above the collarbone. You will find a stitch in the skin where the tube was inserted into the vein at the time of the procedure.

## **What happens after the procedure?**

You will need to rest in bed for around 2 hours after the procedure to minimise the risk of bleeding or bruising at the insertion site. You can eat and drink during this time. If your procedure is being performed as a day case, someone can then drive you home where you should relax until the next day. Sporting activities etc should be avoided for a time after the procedure to allow everything to settle down. Your particular circumstances can be discussed with Radiology or Wesley Clinic staff around the time of insertion. The insertion area may ache after the local anaesthetic wears off. Panadol, Panadeine or Digesic should control the pain. Sometimes the dressings feel uncomfortable – phone Radiology or Wesley Clinic for advice. You will receive a separate pamphlet regarding after care.

## **What are the risks?**

Placement of a Hickman catheter is a very safe procedure and no complications are expected. However, every medical procedure has associated risks and although the chance of something going wrong is very small, possibilities include bleeding or bruising, damage to any adjacent structures and infection. In the long term, some catheters can get infected or may be associated with clots in the veins.

The procedure will be discussed again in person with you and if you have any questions, please feel free to ask the doctor or nursing staff.

If you experience any problems after the procedure, contact us on 3371 9588 or after hours 3839 2288. Alternatively, you can contact The Wesley Clinic on 3335 1900.

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