

Southernex



Imaging Group Ltd

June 2004

HICKMAN CATHETER INSERTION

Post Operative Care

Will there be any pain after the procedure?

Most people have no discomfort immediately after the procedure because the local anaesthetic used is still working. As this wears off, you will feel some discomfort – this varies from person to person. If you are already on painkillers as part of your treatment, these will take care of post-operative pain from today's insertion.

If you are not taking painkillers already, Panadol or an equivalent will usually be sufficient; Panadeine or its equivalent is stronger and you may find these helpful.

It would be unusual for people to require anything other than tablet painkillers. Please contact your doctor or Radiology if you are having bad pain.

What's under the dressings?

Above the collarbone, there is a 1cm cut; this may be sewn up with a dissolving stitch under the skin. Alternatively, there may be a stitch on the outside. If the stitch is outside the skin, it should be removed in 1 week.

There will also be 1 or more stitches where the Hickman Catheter exits your skin. These often stay in for 6-8 weeks.

What do I do about the dressing?

There are many different approaches to post-operative care and you may be given specific instructions by The Clinic or the hospital ward staff. Otherwise, we recommend that you keep the incisions clean and dry for 2 days and leave the dressing in place. When you shower, cover the dressing with plastic or "Gladwrap", and secure it with sticky tape. After 2 days, gently ease the dressing off in the shower.

Once you have the dressings off, you'll probably find some bits of old crusty black blood along the wound – gently dab these off with clean damp cotton wool.

You may wish to re-cover your wounds with dressings but this is up to you – they can be left uncovered.

When do I have to come back?

This depends on instructions from The Clinic. Sometimes they ask you to come back on the next day after the procedure. Other times they don't need to see you until your next appointment. Check with The Clinic if you aren't sure about this.

Can anything go wrong? What do I have to watch out for?

Infection is our main concern immediately after the procedure. If you have increasing redness, pain, fever or a discharge that looks like pus, contact your doctor immediately. If necessary, you can contact Radiology as an alternative.

You will need to be seen by a nurse or doctor. If the Hickman Catheter looks infected, we usually try to fix things with antibiotics. Rarely, the Hickman Catheter needs to be removed.

Bruising can occur after these procedures. It is more common if your blood counts are abnormal. You would only need to contact us if you think this is unusually prominent or a worry.

How often does the Hickman Catheter have to be flushed?

This will depend on your individual circumstances. You may be having treatment often enough that addition flushing is not required. If your treatment is infrequent, the Hickman Catheter will need to be flushed every 4-6 weeks – your doctor will decide how often this is needed.

If you have any other concerns, please contact your doctor or Radiology.

Our phone number is **(07) 3371 9588**.

The Wesley Haematology Oncology Clinic phone number is **(07) 3335 1900**.

www.southernxray.com.au

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