

Intravenous Cannula

Information for parents and/or caregivers

Welcome to the Paediatric Unit at Flinders Medical Centre

This Information sheet aims to answer any questions you may have about an intravenous cannula and potential complications that rarely but may occur.

Introduction

A cannula is a thin tube/straw inserted into a vein to administer medications, blood products or fluids.

The cannula is covered in a clear sterile dressing to prevent infection entering and allows nurses to visualize and assess if the area looks ok.

When your child has continuous IV fluids running, the nurse needs to look at the cannula site hourly to ensure there are no complications.

If no fluids are going into the cannula and we need to keep the line open (as it is only a small thin tube), it will need to be flushed with normal saline every 4 hours.

Possible Complications

- Swelling
- Redness [infection]
- Leakage
- Bleeding
- Pain

Any of these can happen if the cannula has become dislodged from the vein into the surrounding tissues or an infection may be developing.

If any of these happens the cannula needs to be removed.

How can you help?

If your child is upset and you notice any of these possible complications immediately call a nurse, as the cannula will need to be removed.

The cannula is dressed as per hospital guidelines so that it stays as secure as possible; it also allows easy access to the site for the nurses to look to ensure that your child has a safe working cannula.

Please do not cover the site of the cannula with any clothing/blanket.

How long does it stay in for?

An intravenous cannula is removed as soon as the clinical indication for its insertion is no longer required.

For more information

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This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.