



# Cannula Information for patients

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## What is a cannula?

Your cannula is a small tube that has been placed in a vein is used to give you fluids or medications if you are unable to take them by mouth. This allows the fluids and drugs to enter your bloodstream and be taken quickly around the body where it is needed.

## When can it be removed?

Generally speaking, once you are eating and drinking your cannula can be removed. However, if you need intravenous fluids or medication such as antibiotics, it will stay in place and be changed every 72 hours, or earlier if a problem occurs, to prevent infection. Sometimes the staff may have a valid reason for leaving the cannula in place for longer, and this will be explained to you on request.

## It is important that you:

- Do not fiddle with, or touch your cannula as this can cause germs to get in.
- Keep the cannula dry when showering by covering the dressing with a plastic bag or some form of plastic wrap.

## Staff will:

- Observe the site through the dressing on a regular basis.
- Wash their hands before and after touching your cannula.
- Wear gloves when touching your cannula.
- Regularly check your cannula.

If this does not happen you are within your rights to ask staff to do this.

## What can you do to help?

Inform staff if your cannula:

- Becomes loose, disconnected or falls out
- The top of the cannula cap is open
- The clear dressing is soiled or loose
- has any leakage or blood around the site
- becomes painful, red or swollen.
- has not been used for 24 hours, as you may be able to have it removed.
- Is still in and you are being discharged.