

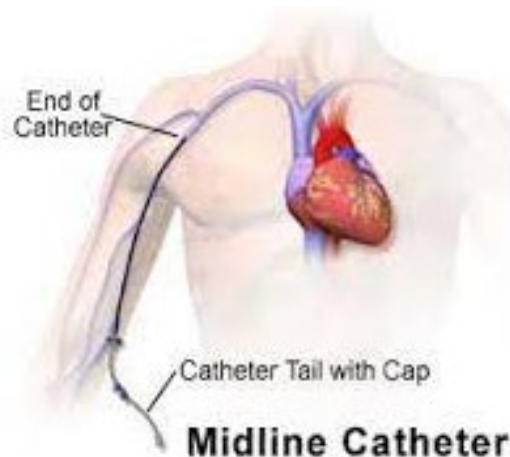
# Midline catheter insertion

**This leaflet is designed to help you understand what a midline catheter is, why they are used and what is involved when you have one placed.**

## What is a midline catheter?

It is a small, hollow 8-20cm tube (lumen) that is inserted into a blood vessel in your upper arm with the tip located just below the armpit. The catheter allows medications, intravenous fluids, and blood products to be delivered directly into your bloodstream. The catheter may be left in your arm for 28 days or 4 weeks.

One of the main reasons for having a midline is to stop patients having needles repeatedly inserted into their veins while receiving treatment.



## How is the midline put in?

The catheter will be inserted by either a doctor or a vascular access nurse/clinical specialist using sterile technique. This means that they will take precautions to prevent germs from entering your body. Similar precautions should be taken for every catheter-related procedure. The clinician may wear a gown, mask, eye protector, and gloves for the insertion procedure. The catheter will be inserted into a vein in your arm near your elbow. It may be placed in either arm. An ultrasound machine will be used to scan your veins. Then a local anaesthetic is administered to 'numb' the area on your arm where the line goes into your skin. You may feel slight discomfort from the needle during the insertion, but no sensation should be felt while the catheter is being threaded into the vein. The procedure takes no more than 30-40 minutes.

## After your midline is placed

Your arm may feel slightly tender for a short time after the line has been inserted but you should feel no ill effects afterwards.

## Care and maintenance of your midline:

After the catheter is inserted, a small portion will remain outside of the body. A protective dressing will be placed over the insertion site to keep the area clean and prevent germs from entering your body. **A sterile dressing should cover the insertion site at all times.**

The catheter will be held in place and secured using an anchoring device known as a Statlock. This is a piece of adhesive that is placed on your arm and the catheter is snapped into place. A needle free connector is attached at the hub of the catheter to keep the system closed and acts as a barrier to any potential source of bloodstream infection.

The catheter should not be immersed in water. A shower sleeve can be used to keep the dressing dry and intact while bathing.

Depending on your situation and the type of therapy you will require, you or a family member may be trained to care for your catheter. Please follow the instructions given to you by the nurse or doctor.

- **Caution:** Visible blood along the catheter is a source of blockage and infection. If you see blood in the catheter, ask the nurse to flush your catheter as soon as possible.
- **Caution:** Never allow a health care professional to take your blood pressure in the arm with the catheter, as this could cause the catheter to become blocked or otherwise damaged.
- **Caution:** Do not attempt to remove your catheter. Only a healthcare professional familiar with the appropriate techniques should remove the catheter.

### Risks and complications:

- **Infection:** The main risk with midlines is that they may become infected once they are in place if not looked after properly. Staff caring for or using your midline should always wash their hands and wear gloves before touching your line. The end of the line should always be cleaned thoroughly before use.
- **Thrombosis:** There is a small risk that patients with a line can develop thrombosis or 'clot' in their arm that the line is in. This happens very infrequently. If you develop any shoulder pain or a swollen arm, please report it to your nurse or health care professional.
- **Bathing / Showering:** You may do both. You will be supplied with a plastic sleeve to cover your arm with the midline. This should be used every time you have a shower or bath. The line and dressing should not get wet as this may increase the risk of infection.
- **Activity:** Carry on as much as normal and do not restrict the movement of your arm. Vigorous activity such as contact sports may displace the line and should be avoided. Please note that **it is not possible** for you to go swimming with a midline in place. If in doubt about resuming specific activities, please ask your doctor or nurse.

### Things to look out for

If the skin around your line becomes red, painful or if you feel "shivery" or cold after your line has been flushed, it may mean you have an infection. If your arm, shoulder or neck becomes painful, or swollen, please report to your nurse or doctor (inpatient) or contact the hospital department you are having treatment in or your district nurse (outpatient).

### Contacting us

Radiology Day Case Unit, Tel 0118 322 8368 (Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm).

Radiology Vascular Access Team, Tel 0118 322 6935 (Mon-Friday 8am-6pm)

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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Cris Malabuyoc, Vascular Access CNS Radiology, March 2023. Next review due: March 2025.

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