

How you can help

- Ensure you understand about your child’s cannula and how you can help care for it.
- Never attempt to put anything into the cannula.
- Please do not silence pump alarms.
- Never attempt to stop or disconnect fluids yourself. Call your nurse if the fluid bag is empty.
- Please do not pull on the cannula or any drips that may be attached to it.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry. A good solution is to keep the cannula covered with a bandage or glove / mitten. This stops your child ‘playing’ with their cannula. Ask your nurse for assistance with bathing your infant / child. Take care when dressing / undressing your infant / child so that the cannula does not dislodge.



Contact details:

Phone:.....ward

Contact Details:.....

REMEMBER

Ask your nurse if you are unsure about anything about your child’s care.

Additional instructions

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Children’s Health Ireland
at Crumlin

**Information for parents of an
infant / child with an
INTRAVENOUS CANNULA**



Children’s Health Ireland at Crumlin

Phone: 01 409 6100

What is a Cannula?

A cannula is a small flexible plastic tube inserted into a vein for the purpose of giving medication, fluids or blood products directly into the blood stream (intravenously).

It is also called a 'Freddie' a 'line' or a 'drip'. Treatment will be given as an infusion (drip) or in a syringe (bolus).

The insertion will be carried out by a member of staff trained to perform cannulations. They will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have. They may place some cream on to make your hand numb. A tight band (tourniquet) will be used temporarily to make the veins more visible.

There may be a small amount of pain when the cannula is inserted, it may feel like a small pin prick but it will not hurt once inserted. You can assist by distracting your child during the procedure and providing comfort. The tight band-Tourniquet is removed once the cannula is in place.

A cannula is kept in place with steristrips and a clear breathable dressing. A clamped extension set is then placed onto the cannula to allow for easy access to give medication. It is important that the clamp is closed at all times when the cannula is not in use. To further secure the cannula, tape will be applied.

Care of the cannula

Staff will inspect the cannula site at least twice daily to check it is healthy and can still be used.

They will flush the cannula with sterile salty water (saline) before and after giving a bolus or infusion. If the cannula is not in continuous use but still needs to be kept in, your nurse will flush it with saline. If this hasn't happened or the cannula hasn't been used for some time (10-12 hours) ask the nurse to check is it still necessary to remain in place.



Are there any risks?

Every procedure carries some risks and complications. However, any object including a cannula, that breaks the skin has a risk of letting infection into the body. Strict handwashing and good clean aseptic technique will reduce the risk.

On some occasions it may be difficult to insert the cannula and may require several attempts. Also, during cannula insertion or removal, the cannula site may bleed or bruise.

While IV Cannulation is a very simple, safe procedure with very little risk of serious complications there are some risks to be aware of.

These include:

- Risk of **infiltration** of IV medication/fluid into the surrounding tissue.
- We reduce this risk by checking the cannula site hourly if fluids are infusing continuously and flushing the cannula regularly with saline.
- Risk of **phlebitis** (vein irritation) due to the presence of the cannula, medication or fluid which causes local inflammation of the vein at or near the insertion site. Securing the cannula in position and attaching a T connector extension piece minimizes this risk.

Risk of **blockage** of the cannula which will prevent it from being used. We may be able to unblock it; however, it may be necessary to replace your infant/child's cannula if it is not working properly. This is not unusual and nothing to be concerned about.

IMPORTANT

Please tell a member of staff IMMEDIATELY, if you have concerns about the cannula or if your infant / child appears in pain OR you notice redness, swelling, heat, bleeding or fluid leakage around the cannula site.