

# Caring for your child's cannula at home

**This leaflet explains how to care for a cannula at home. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.**

## What is a cannula and what is it used for?

A cannula is a small, hollow flexible plastic tube that is inserted into a vein using a needle. The needle is removed and the plastic cannula is left in place. The cannula is taped with a clear dressing and is usually secured with a bandage. The cannula is used to give medicines into the vein (also known as intravenous).

## Why does my child need a cannula?

The medical/surgical team looking after your child has decided that it is best for your child to receive medication through an intravenous route, which is given straight into the bloodstream via a vein. This is the most effective way for a medicine to be given. Depending on which medication your child receives, it will either be given over a few minutes, or over a longer time by using a special pump.

## How do I care for the cannula?

- The cannula must be kept clean and dry, avoid direct contact with water (avoid bathing)
- Always keep the cannula wrapped up in a bandage (you will be provided with spares)
- Avoid pulling or knocking the cannula, take care when changing clothes
- Contact us if you notice any problems with the cannula (see below).

## What to do if the cannula comes out

- Apply pressure for five minutes with a piece of gauze
- Elevate your child's arm
- Apply a plaster once the bleeding has stopped
- Contact the team caring for your child during working hours (it is not an emergency).

## How will I know if there is a problem with the cannula?

There are some potential problems that can happen with cannulas. They can irritate the vein or come out, get blocked or infected. Cannulas are used for short lengths of time. Even with the best care, sometimes they just stop working and a new one is needed. The team caring for your child will arrange a new cannula if needed.

Signs of a problem with a cannula include:

- pain or stinging around the cannula
- redness around the cannula
- swelling around the cannula
- leaking of fluid or blood from the cannula site
- the cannula looking as if it has moved and is coming out
- the dressing becoming loose or wet.

If you notice any of the above signs, or you have any concerns, please contact the team caring for your child.

## Contact us

**Evelina Children's Hospital @home team**, t: 020 7188 7188 extension 56267, Monday to Sunday, 8am to 10pm. Alternatively please call the hospital switchboard on 020 7188 7188 and ask for the Children's Hospital @Home Team

**King's College Hospital @home team**, t: 020 3299 8160, Monday to Sunday, 8am to 10pm

**Children's Community Nursing Team**, t: 020 3049 7585

### Key practitioner involved in your child's care:

Name of practitioner .....

Contact details for practitioner .....

## Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday e: [letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)  
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 e: [languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

## NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 e: [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) w: [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)



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