

Tunnelled central line removal

Cancer Services

Introduction – What this leaflet is about?

Your Doctor or Chemotherapy / Oncology Nurse will inform you when your Central Line is to be removed. The reason for this will be explained. It may be that you have completed your planned treatment and the line is no longer required. In some cases the line may need to be removed for your safety if there is a problem with it, such as it being blocked or infected.

Your Central Line will be removed by a Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Registrar Doctor who has been specially trained to remove these devices.

What will happen before the procedure?

Before your line is removed you will be asked to attend hospital on two occasions. The first will be to have a blood test, have a discussion with our team about what the procedure entails and to sign a consent form. The second appointment will be for the day your line is to be removed.

As stated, during the first appointment you will be asked to have a blood test. This is to check that your white blood cells (immune system), platelets and blood clotting are safe for the procedure to happen.

If any of these blood results are not safe, your Doctor or Nurse may ask for the procedure to be delayed until you receive treatment to correct them or they improve on their own.

It is important to let us know at this appointment if you are taking blood thinning medication such as Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, Warfarin or Heparin injections. You will need to stop taking this medication before the line is removed. Your Doctor or Chemotherapy / Oncology Nurse will tell you when to stop taking this medication.

We must have your consent

We will explain how the line is removed, as well as the risks and benefits of having the procedure. Once you have been given the opportunity to ask questions and are happy for us to continue, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

The main benefit for having your line removed is to reduce the known risks of complications by keeping it in, especially if you no longer need it or if there is already a problem. You will have been told about these complications at the time your line was inserted.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

A further benefit is that you will have the freedom of no longer needing to attend hospital on a weekly basis to have the line cared for.

Other benefits will include being able to bathe and do exercise without the restrictions a line insertion brings. The Nurse Practitioner or Specialist Registrar Doctor removing the line will explain when it is safe to do these activities after the line removal procedure.

What are the risks of this procedure?

You will be told about the potential risks when having the line removed. These will include:

- Potential infection at the wound site and / or in the blood
- Pain during and after the procedure
- Bleeding from the wound site
- Breakage of the line when attempting to remove it
- Air entering the blood stream on removal of the line (Air Embolism).

What will happen on the day of my procedure?

You may eat and drink on the day of your line removal and follow your normal daily routine.

If you normally drive and wish to bring yourself to hospital, this procedure should not affect your ability to drive afterwards.

You can bring someone with you but they will not be allowed into the procedure room at the time and will be asked to wait for you.

You are advised to take your usual medication unless we have specifically advised you not to. Please bring a copy of any medications that you are taking including any natural remedies or medicines purchased at the chemist.

You will be asked about your allergy history by the person removing the line. You must let them know if you have any known allergies.

How is the line removed?

You will be asked to remove the clothing from your chest area and lie down on a bed provided.

The area of your skin covering the line will be examined to locate the "cuff" beneath the skin. This is a special part of the line that allows your skin to attach itself and stops the line falling out when it was put in.

Once the cuff has been found, the skin around it will be cleaned using an antiseptic solution and a sterile towel will be placed over the clean area.

To ensure you are comfortable during the procedure, a local anaesthetic will be injected to numb the area surrounding the cuff of the line. You may feel the health care professionals hands resting against your skin, but you should not feel anything sharp or painful.

Once you and the person removing the line are happy the area is numb a small cut (approx 2-3cm) will be made into the skin near the cuff. The skin attached to the cuff will be teased away using forceps until the cuff is free and can be removed easily.

As the line is being removed you will be asked to breathe out forcefully until told to stop and then breathe normally again. This is to reduce the risk of air getting into the vein when removing the line.

Once the line is out, you will be asked to breathe normally.

Firm pressure will be applied to the site for a few minutes to help stop any bleeding and reduce the risk of air getting into the vein.

Once the bleeding has stemmed (stopped), you will require 1 or 2 sutures to close the small cut and help to heal the wound.

Finally, a sterile dressing will be applied to the wound. This should remain in place for 48 hours, unless the dressing accidentally becomes wet, soiled, or you notice blood coming through.

What should I expect after the line has been removed?

It is expected that you will be able to manage your usual daily activity as normal after the line is removed. We do not expect you will require any extra support from your family or friends unless you specifically request it.

You may notice your skin being a little sore for a day or so, especially when the local anaesthetic wears off. You may wish to take a mild pain killer like paracetamol to see if this helps. Pain from this procedure should not be unbearable. If you start to become concerned you should contact the Emergency Helpline Number on 07920 587 036 for advice.

Occasionally there is a little oozing of blood on the day of removal; this is normal. Should bleeding occur which soaks through the dressing, or the area becomes red and inflamed, then you should contact the Emergency Helpline Number on 07920 587 036 for advice.

After 48 hours you can remove the dressing to expose the sutures to the atmosphere. It is usual for the skin around the wound to look bruised. After a few days you will notice the bruising changing colour and slowly disappearing over time. If this does not happen or your bruising worsens, you should contact the Emergency Helpline Number on 07920 587 036 for advice.

Keep the wound clean and dry while the sutures remain in place. You can bathe the site with water that has been boiled and then cooled.

Skin is expected to heal quickly and stitches can be removed after 7 days. This is usually done by a Practice Nurse at your GP Surgery. We will ask you to contact them to arrange for this to happen. We can arrange an alternative plan if this is not appropriate, and will agree this with you on the day of your line removal.

What should I do if I become unwell after the procedure?

If at any time following the procedure you suddenly become unwell, develop chest pain, shortness of breath and / or dizziness, you are asked to ring a 999 ambulance and seek urgent medical attention.

Contacts and useful numbers

Emergency Helpline Number on 07920 587 036.

You will not need any follow up appointments after this procedure. Please keep your follow up appointments with your Consultant as planned.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。