

# Information for patients and carers

## Peripheral Cannula Virtual Ward



We use the term “Virtual Ward” for treatment at home (with appropriate medical supervision and access) in this case for intravenous therapy through a cannula-treatment that would once meant patients needed to stay in hospital.

## What is a Peripheral Cannula?

A peripheral cannula is a short flexible tube that is inserted into a vein usually in your arm or hand. This enables medication, including antibiotics and fluids, to be given directly into your bloodstream by a practitioner.

## Taking care of your cannula

A cannula can remain in place for up to 72 hours providing that it remains clean, dry and free from signs of infection. A cannula is secured with a sterile, adhesive and transparent dressing.

## Tips

- To avoid getting the cannula wet-you should cover the bandage with clingfilm when washing or showering. We strongly recommend against bathing with a cannula
- Avoid bending your wrist or elbow depending on the position of the cannula
- Keep your hands clean, avoid gardening and handling pets
- Wear loose clothing to avoid accidentally catching your cannula

**If you have any concerns, please contact the team caring for you. If this is after 5pm, please call the ‘Go To Doc’ service on 01257 247094 advising that you are a patient on the Virtual Ward.**

Let them know as soon as possible if you are experiencing one or all of the following:

- Pain or stinging around the cannula site

- Fluid or blood leaking from the cannula site
- Swelling, heat or redness at the site of the cannula or redness spreading over your arm

## What to do if the cannula comes out

If this happens there may be some bleeding from the cannula site **DO NOT PANIC!**

- Apply firm pressure over the site using a clean cloth or kitchen towel, and raise the arm up until it stops bleeding
- Do not attempt to reinsert the cannula
- If you are on blood thinning medication (i.e. warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, apixaban) you may need to apply pressure for quite a long time for the bleeding to stop
- If the bleeding does not stop, please contact the virtual ward team or 'Go To Doc' service after 5pm and weekends. In severe cases call 999

**Failure to insert:** Everyone's veins are different; there are several reasons why the insertion of a cannula is not always successful. Occasionally it may not be possible to insert a cannula; if this is the case, an alternative will be discussed with you.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:  
Virtual Ward **07355470295**.

## Sources of further information

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

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

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.  
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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