

## Information for Parents/Carers

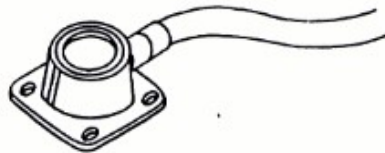
### TOTALLY IMPLANTED VENOUS ACCESS DEVICES

This leaflet tells you about having a totally implanted venous access device (Port). It explains what is involved and what the benefits and possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your child's doctor, but can act as a starting point for such discussions. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask the doctor who has referred you.

#### What are Totally Implanted Venous Access Devices?

These are a type of intravenous access system that is inserted underneath the skin. It is sometimes called a Port. It consists of a fine tube, or catheter, connected to a small chamber with a self-sealing silicone centre.

Silicone centre



Port

Catheter

#### Why is it used?

Ports are used in children and young people who require frequent intravenous (IV) fluids and/or medication. They can also be used for children / young people who require frequent blood samples.

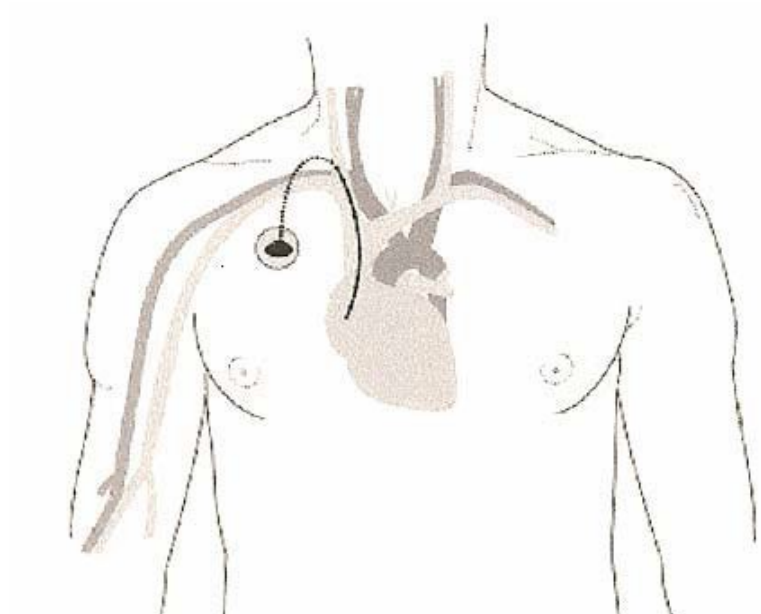
#### How is a Port inserted?

Your child will require a general anaesthetic. The Port is placed under the skin with a small cut. The surgeons usually place the Port just below the collarbone in the upper part of the chest, or underneath the arm on the side of the ribcage. The catheter is then tunneled under the skin into a large vein near the heart. A second small incision (cut) is made in the neck to allow this to be done.

The Port can be used straight away after surgery.

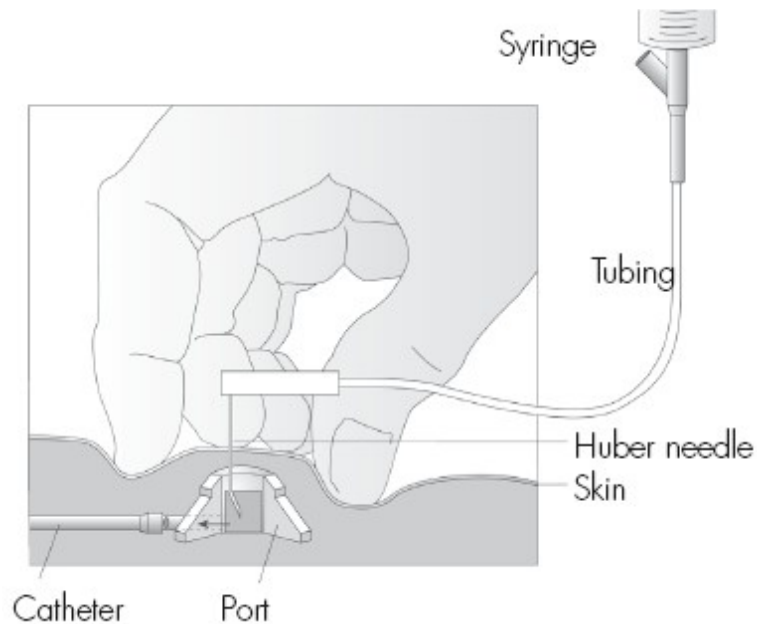
Dissolvable stitches are used, so they will not need to be removed after surgery. Once the wounds are healed, there is just a small bump visible beneath the skin.

A Port in place  
below the right  
collarbone



### **How is the Port used to give treatments?**

The Port is accessed by pushing a special needle (sometimes called a Gripper) through the skin and the silicone membrane of the port. This is done as a very clean procedure, to reduce the risk of introducing infection.



Local anaesthetic cream, such as EMLA™ or ‘cold spray’ or both, can be used to numb the area before the needle is inserted. This should not then be painful, although a pushing sensation may be felt.

If it is being used for a course of IV antibiotics or other treatment, the needle will be left in and covered with an adhesive dressing. Medicines will be given through a bung at the end of the tubing connected to the Gripper needle. The Gripper needle will usually stay in place for the duration of the treatment (usually two weeks) if working well. If the Port is just being accessed for a flush, the Gripper will be removed immediately afterwards.

### **How long can it be left inside?**

Ports can be used for up to ten years or 2000 accesses. However to stop the catheter from blocking, the port must be accessed and flushed every six to eight weeks with a heparin solution which prevents clots forming. This is usually done in clinic by your nurse specialist.

### **Are there any risks or complications?**

Rare but possible complications can be:

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  - Blockage. This can usually be resolved by putting a special flush into the Port.
  - Not bleeding back. This can be disappointing (because the Port can no longer be used to take blood), but can still be used to give medications. We may need to check the port is still working properly. This is done by injecting dye into the Port and then performing a special x-ray.

- Leakage. This may occur if a forceful flush is attempted when the line is blocked. A special x-ray can check if the Port is working properly.
- Infection. Local infection can be treated with antibiotics, but occasionally, if the Port itself becomes infected, it may have to be removed.

### **Is there anything my child cannot do if he/she has a Port?**

- The Port should not interfere with your child's daily activities, although he/she should not take strenuous exercise for a few weeks after surgery, to allow the wound to heal.
  - It is possible to have a shallow bath when the Gripper is in situ avoiding getting the site wet.
  - Showering / bathing is ok when the Port is not being used as long as the area is carefully patted dried afterwards.
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- During a course of treatment where the Gripper is left in place your child is advised to avoid contact sports and activities which may dislodge the needle. Children should not swim with a Gripper needle in place.
  - There is usually no problem with metal detector security systems, for example, at airports.
  - There are a few blood tests that Ports cannot be used for, such as taking antibiotic levels during a course of treatment.

