



York Teaching Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Patients needing a cannula

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

**Medical Elective Services (MES)**

The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Tel: (01904) 725735 or 721062

[MESpatientenquiries@york.nhs.uk](mailto:MESpatientenquiries@york.nhs.uk)

Caring with pride

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## What is a cannula?

A cannula is a fine plastic tube that is put into your vein using a needle to introduce it.

The needle is then removed leaving the cannula in the vein which is held in place with an adhesive dressing.

## Why do I need a cannula?

Your consultant / GP have decided that you need one of the following. These are given directly into your blood stream.

- Fluids / nutritional supplements
- Blood products
- Chemotherapy
- Antibiotics or other medication

Your consultant may also have referred you for tests, where a cannula is required to take repeated blood testing.

## **Where will it be sited?**

We will make every effort to ensure that you are comfortable and can move around as normally as possible.

Cannulas are most commonly put into hands or arms.

Which arm and vein is used will depend on many things, such as where your best vein is, what type of treatment you are receiving, how long your treatment will last and personal preference.

## **Who looks after your cannula?**

A Health Care Professional will insert the cannula in your vein and flush it with a normal saline solution, this is to ensure positioning and patency.

A nurse will monitor your cannula at regular intervals.

## **You are the best person to look after your cannula.**

Please take note of the following advice and if you have any concerns let the nurse know who is looking after you.

- If you have any pain at any point, or if you notice any swelling, redness or anything unusual around the site of your cannula, tell a nurse straight away. It may need to be removed and a new one put into a different vein.
- If your cannula has been placed near your wrist or elbow, it may be necessary to restrict your movements, so try to avoid bending your arm and try to use your free arm when pushing your drip stand.

**The dressing over the cannula should be clean, dry and stuck well to your skin. If not tell the nurse and they will replace it.**

## **When will it come out?**

When your treatment or test is complete and you no longer need it:

- The Nurse or Health Care Assistant looking after you will remove the dressing and cannula.
- Then apply a gauze dressing asking you to apply firm pressure for two to three minutes, this is to stop any bleeding and reduce the risk of bruising.

If your treatment or test is to be carried out over a period of days, we can send you home with your cannula still in place.

You will be provided with a dressing, plaster and tape in a bag to take home.

### **Please take note of the following advice:**

- Keep the dressing that covers the cannula clean and dry.
- Take care when removing items of clothing, so that you do not catch the cannula.

If there is any pain or swelling around the site of the cannula, please phone MES 01904 721062 or Ward 31 01904 726031

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
MES, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York,  
YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 721062 or email  
MESpatientenquiries@york.nhs.uk.

## **Teaching, Training and Research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email  
pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Providing care together in York, Scarborough, Bridlington,  
Malton, Selby and Easingwold communities

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