Discharge Instructions:
Changing the Dressing on Your Central Venous Catheter

You are going home with a central venous catheter in place. A central venous catheter is a small, soft catheter that is placed in a vein in your neck or chest. This is usually a temporary catheter that takes the place of an IV (intravenous) line. It is often used when medications or IV nutrition needs to be given over a period of weeks or months. Having a central venous catheter means that you will not need to have an IV replaced every few days.

You will need to care for your catheter to keep it clean and working. Care will include changing the dressing, flushing the catheter with fluids, and changing the cap on the end of the catheter. A nurse or other healthcare provider will work with you and your family to teach you everything you need to do. This sheet covers the steps for changing your dressing.

Home Care

- Change the dressing over the site every 7 days or sooner if dressing becomes loose or soiled. You, a family member, or a nurse may perform the dressing change. Some doctors prefer that patients visit the office for dressing changes.
- Learn sterile dressing technique if you plan to change the dressing yourself. Ask your doctor or nurse for information about sterile dressing changes.
- You will need a second person to assist you if your child is unable to hold still during the dressing change.

Clean Your Work Area

- Put pets and children out of the room.
- If the surface is washable, clean it with soap and water, and dry it with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- If you are working on a surface that is not washable, such as wood, wipe it free of dust and spread a clean cloth or paper towel over it.
- Move away from the clean surface, if you need to cough or sneeze.

Wash Your Hands

Remember; always wash your hands before and after any contact with any part of your central line.

- Turn on the water.
- Wet your hand and wrists
- Use liquid antibacterial soap from a pump dispenser or antibacterial bar soap. Work up a lather.
- Scrub your hands thoroughly for 3 minutes.
- Rinse your hands.
- Dry your hands with a clean cloth or paper towel. Use this towel to turn off the faucet.
- Remember, once you have washed your hands, don’t touch anything other than your supplies. You must wash your hands again if you touch anything else, such as furniture or your clothes.

Gather Your Supplies

Supplies are often available in “kits” called change trays. These trays contain the supplies you need, organized in a way that makes them easier to use. Here are the supplies you will need:
• Alcohol and Betadine or a Chloraprep applicator
• Sterile gloves
• Transparent adhesive dressing
• Steri-Strips
• Mask (if provided)

Remove the Old Dressing

• Place the sterile dressing change tray on your clean work surface.
• Apply pressure over the old dressing at the site where the catheter enters the skin (insertion site). Gently peel edges of transparent dressing to the center of the dressing. Once dressing is peeled close to the insertion site, you may use a sterile alcohol swab or sterile q-tip to hold the catheter securely in order to gently remove remainder of dressing. ALWAYS PEEL DRESSING TOWARD INSERTION SITE!
• Discard the old dressing.
• Look at the catheter area for redness, drainage, swelling, or any other signs of infection. Call your doctor if any of these signs are present.
• You may use an alcohol pad to loosen the adhesive in the dressing as you lift the edges of the dressing. DO NOT USE ADHESIVE REMOVAL ON ANY PART OF THE CENTRAL LINE DRESSING!

Prepare the Sterile Field

Wash Hands

• Open the sterile tray. Unfold the paper wrapper on the sterile tray. Start with the fold that is farthest away from you. The surface of the paper wrapper is called the sterile field. Be sure nothing (other than the contents in the tray package) comes in contact with the sterile field.
• Put on sterile gloves. (You may now touch the contents of the tray with sterile gloves on)

Clean the Area and Apply the New Dressing

• Clean around the area where the catheter comes out from your skin with alcohol and betadine or the Chloraprep applicator (Apply according to manufacturers recommendations).
• If you have a known reaction to Chloraprep, use alcohol and betadine.

1) Apply the alcohol first, starting from the site where the catheter enters the skin and work your way outward in a circle pattern. Allow the alcohol to dry.

2) Apply the betadine in a similar fashion. Allow the betadine to dry and remain on the skin for 3 minutes.

• If you have no known allergy to Chloraprep, it is the cleaner of choice and should be used instead of the alcohol and betadine.

1) Pick up the Chloraprep applicator. Pinch the wings of the Chloraprep applicator to break the ampule. This releases the antiseptic into the sponge.
2) Clean catheter and insertion site using a back and forth motion with friction for 30 seconds. Cleanse the entire skin area that is covered by the dressing.

3) Allow area to dry completely, at least 30 seconds. DO NOT BLOW, BLOT, OR WIPE AWAY!!!

- Apply transparent dressing. Put the top end down first and smooth out the rest across the area where the catheter comes out from your skin.
- Make sure the transparent dressing covers the entire catheter, including the end piece.
- You may want to use the steri-strips to secure the part of the tubing that is outside of the dressing. Do this by placing the steri-strip sticky side up under the outside tubing close to the dressing. Cross the ends of this same steri-strip over each other so that the sticky side is now on the dressing.
- Take off and discard the sterile gloves.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Redness, swelling, or warmth at your insertion site.
- Drainage or pus from your insertion site.
- Medicine or fluids that do not drain from the bag into your Central line.
- Bleeding around the Central line site.
- Shortness of breath or any chest pain.
- Fever or shaking chills especially after your catheter is flushed.