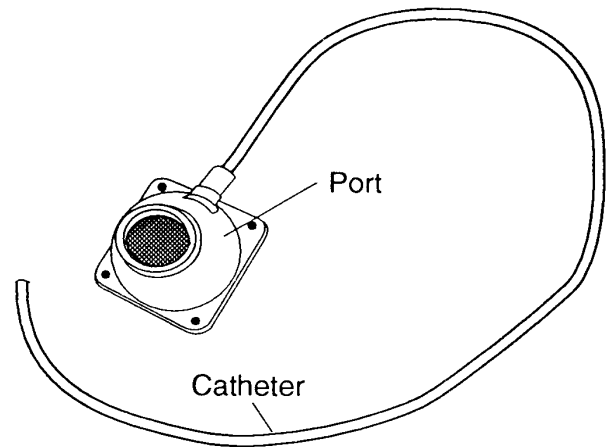


Subcutaneous Access Port or Implantable Port

Here is useful information for you if your doctor has recommended that you have a subcutaneous access port, also called an implantable port or Mediport, put in. A port is a kind of vascular access device that can be used to give you treatments or to take blood samples. This lessens the number of needle sticks you have to have done. The way the port is used will depend on your needs. Ports can be useful in many ways:

- to give chemotherapy
- to get blood transfusions or give blood samples
- to get IV fluids or IV medicines

The port has a tube called a catheter that attaches to it. The catheter is a thin, soft plastic tube that is put into a large vein in your chest.

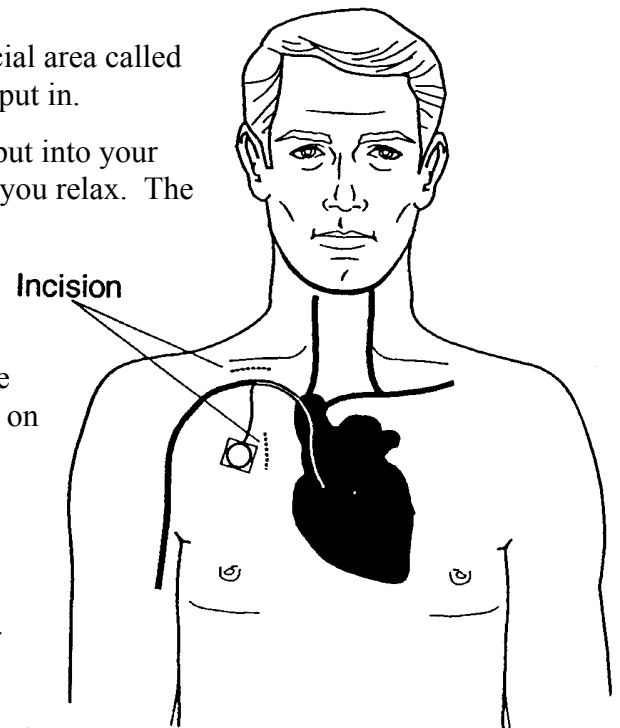


How is a Port put in?

You will either go to the operating room or to a special area called Vascular Interventional radiology to have your port put in.

Most often a port is placed like this. An IV will be put into your arm or hand and you will be given medicine to help you relax. The doctor will inject the local anesthetic or numbing medicine into your skin to numb a couple of small places on your chest and neck. You will feel the needle stick and some burning when the doctor injects the numbing medicine. Although you may be aware of activity around you and feel some pressure on your chest during the procedure, you should not feel any pain. You may even fall asleep during the procedure.

You will have two incisions. The incision on your upper chest will be about one and a half inches long. This is where the port will be placed. The smaller incision on your neck will be less than half an inch long. The catheter will be put into a vein in your chest then tunneled under your skin from the chest incision to the neck incision. The catheter is attached to the port, which is as big around as a quarter coin. The port is fit into a space created under your skin and then the incision is closed. Both incisions are held together by stitches. Special tape called steri-strips™ are also used and covered with small gauze dressing. You will feel a raised area on your chest where the port is implanted.



What should I do before this procedure?

You will be told how to prepare to have this procedure depending on where and how you will have the port placed. Your doctor will make these decisions depending on your needs. You will then be told what to do about eating, drinking or taking medicines before surgery. One of the important factors will be if you will need to be put in a deep sleep with anesthesia, or if you will have lighter sedation for this procedure. Ask your doctor or nurse if you are not sure about what you are to do to get ready for this surgery.

What to Expect after Surgery

After surgery, you should expect some bruising, swelling, and tenderness to the area of your body where the port is placed. These symptoms will usually go away after 24 - 72 hours. Over the counter pain medicines, like Tylenol® or Advil®, will often relieve the discomfort. If needed, you may take prescription pain medicine that your doctor ordered. Most often incisions will heal in about 7 - 10 days. If you have stitches, your doctor will tell you when you need to have them taken out.

Care of Incisions

Leave dressing in place for 24 hours.

After 24 hours:

- Remove the dressing.
- Leave the tapes (Steri-Strips™) covering the incisions in place. It is usual that they fall off on their own in 10-14 days. Your health care professional may suggest another type of dressing or tape to be used.
- Either leave the area open to air, or apply a fresh, sterile 4 x 4" gauze dressing.

Cleaning the area:

The area around the incision may be washed gently with soap and water after 24 hours.

- Avoid washing the incision itself. Pat dry. Do not scrub.
- If you use the gauze dressings, change the dressing every 24 hours. Also change the gauze dressing any time it gets damp, soiled or wet.
- Keep the incision area clean and dry.

- Most people may take a shower the next day. Follow these instructions to take a shower:
 - ▶ Be gentle with the incisions. Do not let the water beat on them.
 - ▶ Keep the incisions and gauze dressing dry while in the shower. Do not get the incision or gauze dressing wet while in the shower. Here is how:
 1. Carefully cover the incision and dressing with plastic wrap (like Saran® Wrap). Apply the plastic wrap to cover the entire incision and gauze dressing. Use tape to seal the edges all around so that no water runs behind the plastic wrap.
 2. After the shower, remove the plastic wrap. Apply a fresh dressing.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following:

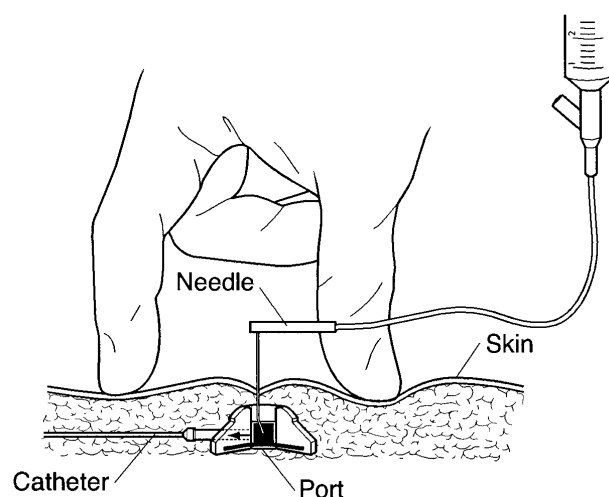
- Increased bruising, swelling, tenderness
- More redness at your incision sites
- Fever or chills
- More pain at your incision sites
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Increased bleeding or drainage from your incisions
- Any problems with your Port

Using Your Port

A port can most often be used shortly after surgery. A special needle, called a non-coring needle, goes into the port. This needle has a 90-degree angle (see picture). Straight needles should not be used on your port. Most people feel pressure and a slight prick as the needle goes in. This feeling will decrease over time for most people. Your treatments and blood draws are done through this needle into your port.

Treatments may be done in your home, in an outpatient clinic, or in the hospital. The port can stay in place as long as you need it and it is working well. This may be from several months to a year or more.

The port can be removed when you no longer need it for your treatment or if there are problems. Removal is done in either the operating room or a special treatment room. The skin around the port is numbed before the port is taken out.



Care Of Your Port

Your port will be flushed with a fluid after each use. If your port is not being used, this needs to be done every four weeks. This keeps it clear and open. This is most often done by a health care professional. If you or your family need to do this, a nurse will teach you.

General Activity Guidelines

The port should not change your daily activities. Avoid strenuous exercises for a few weeks after surgery, so that the body can heal. Your nurse or doctor will answer any questions you have about resuming activities that you normally do.

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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Division of Nursing - James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute
The Ohio State University Medical Center

- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191.