Discharge Instructions for Central Venous Catheter

You are going home with a central venous catheter, a flexible tube placed in a vein in your neck or chest to deliver medications or nutrients. You will probably have it for several weeks or months. Care will include changing the dressing, flushing the catheter with fluids and changing the cap. Supplies will be provided by the home health agency and may look different from those used in the hospital. You will leave the hospital with contact information for the home health agency and a date for your first appointment.

Home Care

- Shower as needed, covering the insertion site and dressing with plastic wrap to keep it dry.
- Do not swim, bathe or otherwise submerge the catheter in water.
- Change the dressing every seven days, or more often if it becomes soiled or wet. If you or a family member change the dressing, use the sterile dressing technique.*
- Wash hands before and after any contact with any part of the catheter. Cleanliness is a must.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call the doctor immediately in case of:

- Increased pain, bleeding, redness or foul-smelling discharge around the catheter site
- Fever or chills
- Ongoing vomiting or nausea
- Numbness, coldness or tingling around the catheter site
- Leaking fluid at the insertion site
- Swelling of the hand, arm or neck on the side where the catheter is inserted
- Catheter is difficult to flush
- Catheter is pulled out
- Medicine or fluids failing to drain from bag into catheter

When in doubt, call the doctor or home health nurse.
*Sterile Dressing Technique*

**Prepare Work Area**
- Enlist a helper if changing the dressing of a child who cannot be still during the dressing change.
- Clear the room of pets and children.
- If the surface of the work area is washable, clean it with soap and water, then dry with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- If the surface 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 work area to cough or sneeze.

**Wash Hands**
- Wet hands and wrists.
- Work up a lather with antibacterial soap.
- Scrub hands thoroughly for three minutes.
- Rinse.
- Dry hands with a clean cloth or paper towel. Use this towel to turn off the faucet.
- Once your hands are clean, don’t touch anything other than your supplies.

**Gather Supplies**
Supplies are often available in kits called change trays, organized for your convenience. The supplies include:
- Chloraprep (or alcohol and betadine, if you are allergic to Chloraprep)
- Sterile gloves
- Transparent adhesive dressing
- Catheter stabilization device such as “Statlock”
- Mask (may or may not be included)

**Remove Old Dressing**
- Place change tray on clean work surface.
- Apply pressure over old dressing where catheter enters skin (the insertion site). Gently peel edges of transparent dressing to center of dressing. Once dressing is peeled close to the insertion site, use a sterile alcohol or cotton swab, if needed, to hold catheter securely in order to gently remove remainder of dressing. *Always press dressing toward insertion site.*
- Discard old dressing.
- Examine catheter area for redness, drainage, swelling or other signs of infection. Call doctor if any signs are present.
- To remove Statlock, use index finger of one hand to apply pressure to catheter hub, while using the other hand to lift one plastic lid of the Statlock, then the other.
• Hold catheter in place while carefully removing it from the Statlock. Failure to do this may result in accidental removal of the catheter.
• Use an alcohol pad, if needed, to loosen the adhesive as you lift the edges of the Statlock. Do not use adhesive removal on any part of the dressing.

Prepare Sterile Field
• With washed hands, open sterile tray and unfold paper wrapper, starting with the fold farthest from you. Make sure nothing other than change tray contents come in contact with the surface of paper wrapper, called the sterile field.
• Put on sterile gloves. You may now touch the contents of the tray with sterile gloves one.
• Put on mask, if applicable.

Apply New Dressing
• Clean insertion site with Chloraprep unless you are allergic, in which case: Apply alcohol first, starting from insertion site and working outward in a circle. Allow alcohol to dry, then apply Betadine in a similar fashion, allowing it to dry and remain on the skin for three minutes.
• If using Chloraprep, pick up the applicator and pinch the wings to break the ampule, which releases the antiseptic into the sponge.
• Clean catheter and insertion site with back-and-forth motion with friction for 30 seconds. Cleanse the entire skin area covered by the dressing.
• Allow area to dry completely, at least 30 seconds. Do not blow, blot or wipe.
• Apply Statlock package’s skin prep where Statlock will be placed and allow 10 to 15 seconds to dry.
• Slide Statlock anchor pad under catheter wing (where suture holes are) and work the suture holes over the Statlock posts.
• Close retainer lids over posts one at a time.
• Position the Statlock, then peel away the paper backing one side at a time.
• Apply transparent dressing. Put the top end down first and smooth out the rest across the area where catheter exits skin.
• Make sure the transparent dressing covers the entire catheter, including end piece.
• Take off and discard gloves.
• Wash hands and remove mask, if applicable.