

Compliments, comments and complaints

If you'd like to compliment, comment or complain about our service please contact our Customer Services Department:

Customer Services Department

Livewell Southwest

First Floor
Windsor House

Plymouth

PL6 5UF

Tel: 01752 435201

Email: customerservicespch@nhs.net

Contact details

Urgent Care Nursing Service

Tel: 01752 435564

Please note that this is not an emergency number and we may not be able to speak to you immediately, but you can leave a message and we will call you back.



Livewell Southwest



@livewellsw

Urgent Care Nursing Service Intravenous Cannula



Patient Information

We support people to lead independent, healthy lives

What is an intravenous cannula?

An intravenous cannula is a small tube that is inserted through the skin into one of the veins in your arm or hand. This will allow the nurses to administer fluids and medication to you.

Why do I need it?

Your doctor may have prescribed intravenous treatment. This may be the best or only way for your treatment to be given. The treatment may be given via a 'drip' or injected using a syringe.

The doctor or nurse should explain your treatment and tell you the wanted and unwanted effects so that you know what to expect and can tell you about any side effects or problems you may experience.

How will it be put in?

The cannula is inserted into a vein using a fine needle, this is then removed leaving a small tube (cannula) in the vein.

You may feel a sharp pain as the needle goes in but this shouldn't last once the cannula is in place.

A dressing will then be applied and the cannula flushed with some saline to check that it is in the right place. The fluid may feel cool as it is injected in.

How will the staff look after the cannula?

They will:

- Make sure the dressing covering the cannula is clean and secure and replace it as necessary
- Check before giving any treatment that the cannula is working properly, flushes easily and the area round it is not too red or painful
- If the cannula is no longer needed, they will remove it

How should I look after my cannula?

- By keeping the dressing clean and dry and not touching it. Tell the nurse if it becomes wet, dirty or loose
- By protecting it from knocks
- Wear watches and other jewellery on the opposite side to prevent them catching on the cannula
- Take extra care when dressing and undressing. It is advisable to wear clean, loose fitting sleeves
- Report any problems such as pain, redness or swelling

How long will it stay in?

The cannula should be removed by a nurse:

- If it is not being used
- When the treatment is finished
- If the insertion site is red or sore
- If the cannula becomes dislodged
- If after three days the cannula is still required, it should be replaced

What happens if the cannula falls out?

- As the cannula is in a vein, there may be some bleeding. If this happens, apply pressure using a clean piece of gauze or tissue
- Apply a plaster when the bleeding has stopped
- There will be no need to call anyone as it can be replaced if it is still required, at the next visit
- If the bleeding does not stop: apply pressure, raise your arm above your head and seek advice

If you have any questions about your cannula, please speak to one of the team.