

Information about a

# **Tunnelled Central Venous Catheter (TCVC)**

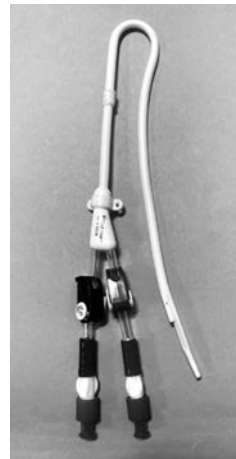


# Why do I need a Tunnelled Central Venous Catheter (TCVC)?

A Tunnelled Central Venous Catheter (TCVC) provides access to your blood stream which is necessary for dialysis. If you no longer need this, the vascular access nursing team will arrange to have it removed.

## What is a TCVC and how does it work?

A TCVC, also known as a line, is a soft flexible tube that we insert under the skin and then place into a large vein, usually at the neck. However, we can also place it in a vein in the groin. We then insert the TCVC until the tip is sitting in the top of the heart.



The point where the TCVC goes through your skin is called the **exit site**. A small cuff on the TCVC at the insertion site helps to stop the catheter coming out by attaching the TCVC into the skin and also prevents infection from entering your bloodstream. The tube will come out of the skin on your chest and hang downwards. TCVC have openings that are known as **lumens**. The end of each lumen is covered by a cap which staff replace at every dialysis session.

During haemodialysis, we connect the lumens to the haemodialysis machine; one lumen takes blood from your body to be cleaned and remove fluid, the other lumen returns the cleaned blood. There is a clamp on each lumen which should only be opened by a dialysis nurse when they are attaching you to the machine. The dialysis nurse will clean your TCVC using a sterile procedure before removing the 'lock' from your line. The 'lock' is a solution that prevents clots forming in your TCVC between dialysis sessions. At the end of your dialysis treatment, your dialysis nurse will flush the TCVC with saline and insert another 'lock' solution.

We cover the exit site with a special clear dressing that has a Chlorhexidine patch. Chlorhexidine is a type of antiseptic which reduces the risk of infection entering your blood stream. Your dialysis nurse should replace this dressing once a week or more frequently if it is dirty or has been dislodged.

## Caring for your TCVC

Do	Don't
Keep the area round your TCVC clean at all times.	<b>Never</b> use sharp objects near your TCVC
Keep your exit site dressing in place at all times.	<b>Never</b> use scissors near your TCVC as a cut in your TCVC is a medical emergency and you are at serious risk of significant bleeding or introducing air into your bloodstream
Be aware of your TCVC when carrying young children. Tuck it out of the way of tugs and pulls.	<b>Never</b> shave around your TCVC. If you need to shave, the dialysis nurse will do this for you.

Do	Don't
Be aware of your TCVC if you have pets, particularly those that are used to curling into to you near your exit site.	<b>Never</b> open the caps or remove the caps from the end of your TCVC. These prevent air and bacteria entering the catheter and reduce the risk of life threatening bleeds.
Be aware and avoid clothes that may catch and tug on your TCVC	<b>Never</b> let anyone other than trained dialysis staff access your TCVC except in an emergency
When your TCVC is being connected, disconnected or the TCVC dressing is being changed, try to avoid breathing or coughing over your TCVC to reduce the risk of bacteria or viruses entering the bloodstream.	Don't use fake tan and skin products other than soap on the skin around your exit site.
Make your dialysis nurses aware of any skin changes or rashes around your exit site.	Don't get your dressing wet. Please do not have deep baths or go swimming. Take care to keep it dry when showering. Wash your hair over a sink to avoid getting the dressing wet.

## What to do if...

### ...your TCVC becomes blocked.

Your dialysis unit will use medication and special locks in the lumen to dissolve any clots and unblock it. If this is unsuccessful, you may have to attend the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital for a longer infusion of clot dissolving medication.

**...you are admitted to A&E as an emergency.**

If you are admitted to Accident and Emergency, other medical staff may need to access your TCVC for blood samples or to give medication. You should tell the staff that there is a locking solution in the TCVC that they need to remove first. They also need to be made aware that the TCVC should be flushed with saline and locked with heparin 5000iu/ml with a volume indicated on each lumen or Taurolock Hep 500. They should contact your renal unit for advice.

**...you accidentally cut or make a hole in the tubing.**

Pinch above the hole and call 999. Tell them you have a hole in your central venous access line. Open your door for the ambulance crew. Lie on your left hand side with your feet up and your head down until help arrives.

**...you bleed from your exit site.**

Apply pressure over the dressing. If this stops no further action is necessary but let your renal unit know. If this does not stop, contact the renal ward for advice. Depending on how bad the persistent bleeding is, consider phoning 999 and tell them you have severe bleeding from a central venous access line.

**...your line clamp breaks.**

Do not remove the caps. Contact the vascular access nursing team (Monday to Friday 6.30am – 4.00pm) or your dialysis unit outwith these times. Your line clamp will need repaired.

**...your TCVC falls out completely.**

Press on the exit site to stop any bleeding and prevent air entering. Contact your dialysis unit and the vascular access nursing team immediately. If you cannot stop the bleeding, call 999 and tell them that your central venous access line has fallen out.

**...you have any signs of infection (fever, shivers, redness, swelling or pain at the TCVC exit site).**

Contact your dialysis unit, your GP or NHS 24 on ☎ 111. Depending on the type and site of infection you may need to come into hospital for intravenous antibiotics and have your TCVC exchanged for a new one. There will need to be a period of 48 hours between TCVC removal and the insertion of a new one.

**...your dressing becomes wet or comes off and exposes the exit site.**

Contact your dialysis unit as they will be able to clean and sterilise the skin before placing a new dressing.

# Phone Numbers

Renal Dialysis Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Vascular Access Nurses (Monday – Friday, 6:30am – 4:00pm):

Leigh Bainbridge ☎ 0141 452 2981

Louise McLeod ☎ 0141 452 3608

Kaye Travers ☎ 0141 452 3695

NHS 24: ☎ 111

Renal Ward 4D, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

☎ 0141 452 2420 or ☎ 0141 452 2421

