

# Tunnelled cuffed-centrally inserted central catheter (tc-CICC)

A tunnelled cuffed CICC is also called a tunnelled cuffed catheter, and previously called a Hickman. It is a central venous access device (CVAD).

## What is a tunnelled cuffed catheter?

A tunnelled cuffed catheter is a long, flexible hollow tube. The tube is called a **catheter**. The catheter usually has a small clamp on it. The hollow space in the tube is called a **lumen**. It can have one, two or three lumens. Each **lumen** has a cap on the end.

The catheter is usually placed into the upper chest. A length of tube and the lumen stays outside and is covered by a dressing. The other end sits in a vein just above the heart. The catheter under your skin has a small fibrous part called a **cuff**, which helps it stay in place and means it can stay in for a long time if needed.

It is used to give treatments and blood transfusions into your bloodstream and can be used to take blood samples. A tunnelled cuffed catheter is used instead of cannulas (needles in your arm) for your treatments. Cannulas are put in for each treatment, but a tunnelled cuffed catheter stays in for the length of your treatments. This makes having frequent, repeated continuous or at-home cancer treatments easier.

Your nurse will give your treatment, or take blood from you, through the lumen. Your treatment travels through the tube straight into your bloodstream.



Tunnelled cuffed catheter on upper chest with no dressing on.  
Image permission: K Curtis



Tunnelled cuffed catheter with dressing – 2 lumens and the catheter supported by cloth tape worn around back of the neck  
Image permission: K Curtis

## How is my tunnelled cuffed catheter put in?

- It will be put in by a specially trained member of your healthcare team in the radiology department or operating theatre (for children).
- You are given light sedation and local anaesthetic to numb the area.
- The catheter is tunnelled under your skin on the chest into a vein in the neck.
- You may have a chest X-ray to check it's in place.
- There may be a small device or stitch that holds it in place. Your nurse will tell you if and when they need to be taken out.
- The catheter may also be secured with a cloth tape to avoid accidental dislodgement.
- A dressing keeps the area clean and helps to keep the catheter in place. This dressing should be changed once a week. Check with your healthcare team for details.
- You may have some bruising and mild discomfort for a few days.

### Do you know?

Date tc-CICC was put in: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of your next dressing: \_\_\_\_\_

Who and when to contact if you have any questions or concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact numbers

Daytime: \_\_\_\_\_

Night/weekend: \_\_\_\_\_

# How do I care for my tunnelled cuffed catheter?

## Each day

Wash your hands before touching your catheter or dressing. Check to see:

- the dressing is clean, dry and not peeling back
- skin is not red, swollen or itchy
- you cannot see the cuff on the catheter.

When bathing, cover the dressing to keep it dry and stop it peeling back.

## Physical activity

- Research shows that continuing physical activity during your treatment is good for your general wellbeing. However, there are some physical activities you will need to avoid, please discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

## Physical activity to avoid

- water activities like swimming or water sports to keep the dressing dry
- contact sports so you don't damage the catheter.

## Things to avoid

- pulling on your catheter
- getting your catheter dressing wet
- using sharp objects near your catheter.

## Common questions

### ✔ What happens when I am not having treatment?

Your tunnelled cuffed catheter will be flushed and have its dressing changed (if you have one) every 7 days. Flushing ensures it remains functional. If the dressing gets wet, dirty, or peels, it can be changed earlier, arrange this with your nurse. In the hospital, nurses will care for it; at home, options include visiting a day unit, having a community nurse visit, or training a family member or caregiver.

### ✔ How long does my catheter stay in?

Your tunnelled catheter can stay in as long as it is needed. This can be months or longer.

### ✔ How is my catheter removed?

A trained healthcare team member will remove your catheter when it's no longer needed, in a day unit, radiology department, or operating theatre.

## ⚠ Important things to look out for:

### Contact your nurse or doctor immediately if:

- you have a temperature of 38°C or higher
- the cap has come off the end of your catheter
  - wash your hands and clamp the catheter first
  - if the catheter doesn't have a clamp on it, bend it over
  - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one.
- your catheter is damaged or split
  - wash your hands, clamp the catheter, and place gentle pressure over the damaged area
  - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one
- you have fluid leaking from or around your catheter
- you accidentally remove your catheter
  - wash your hands apply pressure over the area for 5 minutes.
  - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one.

If you can't contact your doctor or nurse, go to the nearest hospital emergency department for help.

### Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible in working hours if:

- you have redness, pain, swelling
  - under your dressing (including any bleeding)
  - in your arm, neck, or chest area
- your dressing has been wet, is peeling back or there is ooze under the dressing
- your skin is itchy, sore, or stinging under the dressing.

For information for patient and carers scan the QR code



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