

Your chemotherapy infusion device

This leaflet is for use at home as you will be receiving part of your treatment through an infusion device.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why do I have an infusion device?

As part of your chemotherapy regimen you will be receiving a chemotherapy drug called 5-Fluorouracil (5FU). This drug is given directly into your vein and is delivered over a specific number of days by an infusion device. The infusion device (sometimes called a *pump* or *infusor*) allows for the slow and continuous infusion of medication at a pre-planned infusion rate. We need to give the fluid into one of your larger veins through a tube called a central venous access device (CVAD). We will discuss the CVAD insertion with you and provide written information.

Your chemotherapy nurse will be able to tell you exactly how long your device will be attached.

What does my infusion device look like?

The infusion device will look similar to the device in the photograph below.

The photograph shows a particular device which will deliver your chemotherapy at a rate of 2.5 ml per hour. We have a variety of different devices of varying infusion rates and volumes to ensure we can give the treatment over the correct time period.



How can I check the progress of my infusion device?

When connecting the infusion device to your central venous access device (CVAD) the nursing staff will show you the size of the balloon and how you can check that the contents are infusing correctly. (See pictures below)

Over a period of hours, you will notice the balloon gradually shrink in size and the markings on the outer bottle can help you to judge this.

You should check your device every 8-12 hours to see that it is shrinking. If you have a concern it is not shrinking please see the troubleshooting section.



Infusion device full



Infusion device half-full



Infusion device empty

Connecting and disconnecting the device

Your nurse will attach the infusion device containing the chemotherapy to your CVAD. Once attached, it will infuse slowly over a period of days.

We will supply you with a pouch and a strap to hold the device. You can wear the pouch around your waist, attached to a belt, or wear the strap over your shoulder like a bag.

It is normal that the device will feel strange the first time you have it attached. Once you become familiar with carrying the device around it should not interfere with your normal daily activities.

When the device is due to be disconnected a district nurse will be asked to attend your home (this is arranged by the day unit nursing staff when you attend your first chemotherapy appointment), or you will be asked to come to the day unit. The device will be removed and the CVAD flushed with saline (saltwater) and secured. You will need to have the CVAD flushed and the dressing changed every seven days between your treatments. The district nurses will be aware of this and will arrange a time with you.

Practical information

At night, it is important that you do not place the device on the floor, or above your head as this can affect the flow.

Placing the device on a bedside table, bedside drawer or on top of the bed covers will ensure it is at the correct height. You should also ensure that the device does not become tangled in the bed clothes (sheets, pillows, duvets, etc.) as this may pull on the CVAD.

- When showering or bathing you should hang the device away from water. The CVAD can be protected with plastic covering, for example cling film, to keep it dry. Alternatively you GP can supply a purpose-made plastic covering, details of how to obtain this will be given when the CVAD is inserted.
- You can exercise with the infusion device as long as the product remains close to room temperature and is not exposed to water. Ask your doctor or nurse for further advice.
- The device is safe to use around pets but ensure that it is protected from chewing and playing.
- It is safe to travel on planes that have pressurized cabins

What precautions do I need to take?

Chemotherapy drugs are carried to all parts of your body through your blood. Most of the chemotherapy drugs are then excreted through normal bodily fluids (mainly urine). It is important that you take precautions during this time.

- Flush the toilet with the lid down after you have used it.
- Keep a bowl handy in case you feel sick. If you are sick (vomit) use a plastic bowl, it must be thoroughly washed with soapy water after use and then disposed of when you have completed all your treatment. It should not be used for anything else. **Please contact the Acute Oncology Service if you are being sick (vomiting) (the contact details are on page 4)**
- If bed linen becomes soiled with vomit or urine/faeces, it should be washed separately from other items. When removing the soiled linen, please wear gloves and avoid touching the contaminated areas.
- If you are sexually active, you or your partner should use condoms to protect them from exposure to the chemotherapy drugs. This should continue for 48 hours after the chemotherapy has finished.

Troubleshooting

The infusion device is leaking

If you notice fluid coming from the infusion device, tubing or CVAD:

- Check if the connection between the tubing and CVAD is loose. With gloves, gently ensure the connection is tight. Do not screw in too firmly or the connection may crack.
- Check for any visible cracks in the infusion device, tubing or CVAD.
- Use warm soapy water to wash any area on your skin, clothing or furniture that the fluid has come into contact with.
- If you have located the leak, wrap the leak with gauze and tape.
- Close the clamp on your line.
- **Do not disconnect the device.**
- **Contact the team on the numbers below.**

The infusion device does not look like it is emptying

- Check that the clamp on your CVAD is open.
- Check for kinks/folds in the line of the device and also on your CVAD.
- **Do not disconnect the device.**
- **Contact the team on the numbers below.**

The infusion device has emptied too quickly

- If you notice that the device has finished before expected (hours or days earlier), **contact the team on the numbers below.**

The district nurse has not arrived to disconnect your device

If the district nurse has not arrived when expected to disconnect your device or to flush your line please contact them directly. The number can be obtained from your GP. If you cannot get through to them contact the team on the number below.

Side effects of chemotherapy

Some people experience side effects (for example, feeling sick) from having chemotherapy. You will have been given an information sheet describing different side effects and what to do if you experience them. If you have any questions about side effects or have not received the information sheet, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Contact us

Between 8.30am and 6pm Monday to Friday you should ring the Cancer Day Unit at Guy's on **020 7188 6452** and the receptionist will put your call through to the nurse in charge who will advise you on what to do.

If you are unwell or need urgent nursing advice you should contact the Acute Oncology Service on **020 7188 3754** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm).

Outside of these hours, (during the night, weekends and bank holidays), you should ring the main hospital switchboard **020 7188 7188** and ask for the operator for the on-call oncology registrar who will advise you what to do. In an emergency, please call 999.

Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals offer a range of cancer-related information leaflets for patients and carers, available at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/cancer-leaflets. For information leaflets on other conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

The logo for Dimbleby Cancer Care, featuring the text "Dimbleby Cancer Care" in white on a blue circular background.

Dimbleby Cancer Care provides cancer support services for Guy's and St Thomas'. We have a drop-in information area staffed by specialist nurses and offer complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice for patients and carers.

Dimbleby Cancer Care is located in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's. **t:** 020 7188 5918 **e:** DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the clinical nurse specialist or other member of staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

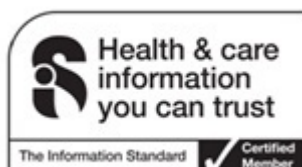
t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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