



You have the right to get information about your healthcare in a way that makes sense to you. If you have trouble speaking or understanding English, you can call us anytime at 03 9605 3056, for a free 24/7 interpreter service to help you.



What is an IV cannula and where will the IV cannula be put?

An IV cannula, also called an 'IV' or a 'drip' is a small plastic tube inserted through your skin into a vein.

The most common site for an IV cannula to be inserted is in your hand or arm. We will try to avoid your elbow or the hand you use for writing. But sometimes this may not be possible.

Why do I need an IV cannula?

An IV cannula is used to give you medication or fluid e.g. normal saline.

Some treatments can only be given through an IV cannula or are best given through a cannula. If you are uncertain or don't know why you need an IV cannula, please talk with your nurse, midwife or doctor.

How will the IV cannula be put in?

Our Healthcare Professionals will follow several steps when inserting your IV cannula. They will always use sterile equipment. The steps include:

- Asking you if there is any problem with your arms such as swelling, or other reasons not to put in an IV cannula.
- Washing their hands or using alcohol hand rub and wearing gloves.
- Cleaning your skin with antiseptic where the cannula is to be inserted.
- Inserting the IV cannula into your vein using a fine needle.

Is inserting an IV cannula painful?

You may feel a sharp sting as the needle goes in. This needle is removed after insertion and only a small plastic tube is left behind. This pain should pass very quickly once the IV cannula is in place.

Can the IV cannula fall out?

- A clear adhesive dressing will hold the IV cannula in place. The IV cannula does not need to be bandaged.
- The IV cannula may fall out if the dressing becomes loose. Please tell staff if the dressing becomes loose.

How will staff care for my IV cannula?

Ongoing care of your IV cannula is important to prevent infection. It is important that:

- Everyone cleans their hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub before and after touching the IV cannula and attached tubing.



- Staff check the IV cannula every few hours for signs of irritation, infection or blockage.
- The dressing is marked with the insertion date so staff will know when the IV cannula should be removed.
- IV cannulas inserted in the Emergency Department (ED) are removed within 24-48 hours. ED staff will place an orange-coloured sticker on the dressing to help identify IV cannulas inserted in ED. IV cannulas inserted in other areas (e.g. ward, medical imaging) will have a blue-coloured sticker on the dressing and they will stay on for 4 days.
- When you have a shower and your IV cannula is attached to a line and bag of fluid, staff do not disconnect the line and bag.

How can I help to care for my IV cannula?

- Try not to touch the IV cannula, the coloured cap or any connections.
- Keep the waterproof covering and IV cannula clean, avoid soaking it and pat dry after your shower.
- Protect the IV cannula from knocks or from being pulled.
- Tell the nurse, midwife or doctor immediately if:
 - the IV cannula becomes **painful**, looks **red** or **swollen**, or feels **hot**.
 - you **notice leaking** around the IV cannula or connections.
 - you **feel hot, cold or shivery**.
 - the dressing or the IV cannula becomes loose or falls out.
 - you feel something is wrong with your IV cannula.
 - you think the IV cannula is not needed any more or has been in place for too long.

When will the IV cannula be removed?

- In adults, IV cannulas are removed after a maximum of 4 days in place. Sometimes staff will remove your IV cannula earlier if it is no longer needed, or if a problem occurs.
- Occasionally, there may be medical reasons an IV cannula stays in for longer than 4 days. This is only if the IV cannula is free from signs of infection and working well.
- When the IV cannula has been taken out, the place where it has been may feel slightly bruised. This bruised feeling can last for up to one week and is quite normal. The dressing which is put over the site after removal can usually be taken off within a couple of hours.
- If there is any swelling, pain, redness or discharge from the site after removal, or if you are concerned, please tell your nurse or midwife if you are in hospital or your local GP if you have gone home.
- All IV cannulas must be removed before you are discharged from the hospital unless you are being transferred to Hospital in the Home (HITH).

