

Advice for patients with a cannula

A cannula is a small plastic tube, placed into a vein that allows medications and fluids to be administered or used for procedures. The cannula can remain in place for a number of days if there are no problems and are usually removed when not in use.

What can you do to help?

- Tell staff immediately if you have any PAIN, SWELLING or REDNESS to the cannula site
- Keep the dressing clean, dry and intact to prevent infection and dislodgement
- Wherever possible avoid disconnection to prevent the cannula blocking
- Tell staff when drips are empty to prevent cannulae blocking
- Care for the cannula to help it to do its job properly

Hospital staff should:

- Always remove cannulas that are not in use
- Always regularly check the cannula, site and dressing
- Always clean their hands and wear gloves on every use of a cannula
- Always clean the connector prior to use
- Always flush the cannula to check it is working properly

