



### Pharmacy Department

# How to Care for Suspected Non-Chemotherapy Extravasation in Adults

## Introduction

There is a possibility that when you received your medication today some of the drug leaked out of the vein and into the tissue surrounding your cannula. This is called extravasation. Extravasation is a rare complication of intravenous drug administration.

## Why is extravasation important?

Some drugs can cause irritation, soreness, and ulcers if they leak into the skin and surrounding tissue, and it is important that you receive the appropriate treatment to minimise the discomfort and damage that can be caused.

## What causes extravasation?

Extravasation can occur because your veins may be irritated by drugs, they may be thin and weak or the cannula itself can become dislodged. The nurses or radiographers that administer your medicines receive training in how to prevent and treat this potential side effect.

## What treatment do I need?

The treatment depends on the drug which is thought to have extravasated.

Please follow the instructions marked in this leaflet for your own individual care.

## Your treatment

The name of the drug which may have extravasated is:

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Apply a cold compress to the cannula site for 30 minutes every 4 hours for 24 hours.

Apply a warm pack (hand hot) to the cannula site for 20 minutes four times a day for 1- 2 days.

Apply a thin layer of hydrocortisone cream (1%) four times a day for 7 days or until redness disappears.  
Stop the cream if the area blisters.

Do not cover the area.

***Staff to delete as appropriate***

## General Advice:

- Only allow clean running water over the area eg shower
- If you immerse the area eg take a bath or wash up, you should first cover the area with a waterproof protective dressing
- After showering or bathing gently pat the area dry with a clean towel
- Do not rub the area
- Do not apply any lotion, creams or ointments to the affected area unless asked to do so by your doctor or nurse
- Do not expose the area to strong sunlight
- Avoid clothing that constricts the affected area
- If your hand has been affected, it may help to take rings off in case you experience any swelling
- Elevate the affected limb on a pillow whenever possible.

## Follow-up care

It is important that the area affected is regularly reviewed by one of the team caring for you. This can sometimes include referral to other specialists.

Before you leave the department the nurse/radiographer caring for you will arrange appropriate appointments for you.

## What should I do if there are any changes to the area?

Please contact the Nurse, Doctor or Radiographer caring for you on the number below if:

- you notice an increase in pain or redness, blisters, streaking along the arm, swelling or ulcers/broken skin
- you develop a fever of more than 38<sup>o</sup> Centigrade
- you have any questions, concerns or problems.

**Remember: Do not delay seeking advice if you notice any changes or are concerned about the area. Out of hours please contact the Emergency Department.**

## Hospital Contact Details

Date of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: Nurse, Doctor, Radiographer, Other (please state): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### About this leaflet:

Author: Christine Dodd, Deputy Chief Pharmacist

Written: August 2018, Revised May 2022

Updated & Approved: June 2022

Review Date: June 2025

Edition: v4

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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