



## Kingfisher Ward

# Caring for your Child's Cannula at Home

**This leaflet explains how to care for a cannula at home. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.**

### **What is a cannula and why is it used?**

A cannula is a thin, hollow, flexible plastic tube that is inserted into a vein using a needle. The needle is removed, and the plastic cannula is left in place. The cannula is taped in place with a clear dressing and is usually secured with a bandage and/or a splint. The cannula is designed to sit comfortably in your vein for up to 72 hours and is used to give medicines into the vein (also known as intravenous). Going home with a cannula in place avoids the need to use a needle to insert a new one for each intravenous therapy required and means that you do not need to stay in hospital overnight while your treatment is in progress.

### **Why does my child need a cannula?**

The team looking after your child has decided that it is best for your child to receive medication intravenously (straight into the bloodstream through a vein). This is the most effective way for a medicine to be given. Depending on which medication your child needs, it will be given over a few minutes, or over a longer time by using a special pump.

### **How to care for the cannula:**

- The cannula must be kept clean and dry and direct contact with water avoided (avoid bathing)
- Always keep the cannula wrapped up in a bandage (you will be given spares)
- Avoid pulling or knocking the cannula and take care when changing clothes
- Contact us if you notice any problems with the cannula (see below).

### **What to do if the cannula comes out:**

- Apply pressure for 5 minutes with a piece of gauze
- Raise your child's arm
- Apply a plaster once the bleeding has stopped
- Contact the team caring for your child during working hours (it is not an emergency).

## How to tell if there is a problem with the cannula

Sometimes problems can happen with cannulas. They can irritate the vein or come out, get blocked or infected. Cannulas are used for short lengths of time. Even with the best care, sometimes they just stop working and a new one is needed. The team caring for your child will arrange a new cannula if needed.

If you notice any of these signs, or you have any concerns, please contact the team caring for your child. Signs of a problem with a cannula include:

- pain or stinging around the cannula
- redness around the cannula
- swelling around the cannula
- leaking of fluid or blood from the cannula site
- the cannula looking as if it has moved and is coming out
- the dressing becoming loose or wet.

## Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

Kingfisher Ward: 01305 254253 between 9pm and 8.30am

Kingfisher PAU: 01305 254218 between 8.30am and 9pm

## About this leaflet:

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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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Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY  
[www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)