
When your baby needs an intravenous (IV)

What is an intravenous?

An intravenous is a thin, plastic tube that is put into a vein. It is also called an IV. The tube or catheter is connected to a bag of fluid hanging above the baby. The tubing from the fluid bag runs through a machine called an IV pump. The pump controls the flow of the fluids so that only the correct amount of fluid is given to your baby. Please do not touch the IV pump.

Why does my baby need an IV?

Through the IV, your baby may be given:

- fluids with water and sugar
- nutrients such as protein, fats, sugars, vitamins and minerals
- medications such as antibiotics

Sometimes a special IV is needed such as:

- Central Venous Line (CVL)
- Percutaneous Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)
- Percutaneous Cutdown Catheter (PCC)

If your baby needs a special IV, you will need to sign a consent form.

A doctor, nurse practitioner or specially trained nurse puts in special IVs.

Where do you put in the IV?

The IV can be started in a vein in your baby's:

- hand or arm
- foot or leg
- scalp

If the IV is put into the scalp, your baby's hair may need to be shaved. Shaving makes it easier to see the vein. Also the tape used to hold the IV in place, needs to stick to the baby's skin. To protect the IV, your baby's arm or leg may need to be placed on a small padded board.

Does the IV hurt my baby?

When the IV is put in, it does hurt your baby. A very small, sharp needle is used to put in the IV. After the IV is in place, it does not hurt any more.

Can I be with my baby when the IV is put in?

We may ask you to leave while the IV is put in. Watching this could make you feel uncomfortable. Also, there is not much room near your baby as 2 members of the health care team usually work together to start the IV.

You can return to your baby right after the IV is put in. If your baby's health is stable, you may be able to hold your baby. Your baby's nurse will tell you if you can hold your baby.

How long will my baby need an IV?

Your baby will have an IV until the fluid and/or medications are no longer needed and your baby is eating well.

Why does the IV get changed?

Sometimes your baby's IV will be taken out and another IV will be put in. Your baby has small, fragile veins.

The IV may need to be changed when:

- the IV is leaking, blocked or pulled out
- your baby's skin is puffy, swollen or red

**If you have any questions about your baby's IV,
please talk with your baby's nurse or doctor.**