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Changing Your Injection Cap

An injection cap is used to connect tubing and syringes to your intravenous (IV) catheter. It is put on the end of your catheter. In general, the injection cap will need to be changed weekly at the same time as your catheter dressing change and after lab draws, as directed. Your nurse will tell you how often your cap needs to be changed.

Preparation

Please refer to your SASH (Saline, Administration, Saline, Heparin) Teaching Mat for more details.

1. **Clean** your work area.
2. **Wash** your hands.
3. **Gather** your supplies:
   - Pre-packaged injection cap(s)
   - Pre-filled saline syringe(s)
   - Pre-filled heparin syringe(s) (if ordered)
   - Alcohol pads
   - Trash container

NOTE: You will need one injection cap, one saline syringe and one heparin syringe (if ordered) per lumen on your catheter. Although caps may look different, each one has a sterile end with a cover. The other end is where you connect to flush the catheter and infuse your medication.

Priming

Prime the injection cap by removing air before connecting it to your catheter.

1. Open the packages of saline syringe(s) and injection cap(s).
2. Pick up the injection cap between your fingers without touching the two ends.

3. Scrub the end of the injection cap that attaches to the syringe with an alcohol pad for 15 seconds. Let it air dry for five seconds.

4. Attach a saline syringe to the injection cap by pushing inward and twisting clockwise.

5. Slowly push on the plunger until you see a drop of saline dripping out of the sterile end of the injection cap. This is known as priming the injection cap. Leave the syringe attached to the injection cap.

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6. Remove the sterile cover from the end of the injection cap. Place the cap on a clean surface, such as the original packaging or an alcohol pad. The syringe does not need to be on the alcohol pad or in the original packaging, only the injection cap.

Changing Caps

1. Clamp your catheter, if the IV line has a clamp. **NOTE:** Valved catheters such as Groshong do not have a clamp.

2. Support the hub (end) of the catheter with one hand. Use your other hand to remove the current, used injection cap from the end of the catheter and discard in a trash container. **Do not let go of the catheter hub.**

3. Clean the end of the catheter hub where the injection cap connects with an alcohol pad for 15 seconds. Allow it to dry fully. Keep holding the end of the catheter hub, making sure not to touch the sterile end.

4. With your other hand, pick up the primed injection cap with the saline syringe attached. Do this by holding the new injection cap between your fingers, sterile side up.

5. Remove clear cover from the new injection cap. Connect it to the end of the catheter by pushing in and twisting clockwise until secure. Be sure not to overtighten the injection cap since it may crack.

   If you need to put down the sterile cap for any reason, place it on a clean alcohol pad. Do not place it directly on your work surface.

6. Unclamp the catheter.

7. Flush the catheter as instructed with the saline syringe. Follow with the heparin syringe, if ordered.

NOTE: If your catheter has more than one lumen, you will need to change the injection cap on each lumen. Repeat the entire process (from priming to changing cap) above for each lumen. **Never reuse injection caps or syringes.**

> **TIP:** If you are changing multiple injection caps, change them in alphabetical "color" order. This will help you remember which caps you have already changed. For example:
> - B – Brown
> - R – Red
> - W – White