

# Inserting a midline (adult)

Information for you



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## What is a midline?

A midline (also called a midline catheter) is a long, thin, flexible tube that is inserted into a large vein in the upper arm. It is used to safely administer medication into the bloodstream, similar to a cannula (a small tube that is inserted into a vein, usually in the back of your hand or arm). A midline can stay in place for approximately four weeks (28 days) if required. Some people do require replacement catheters.

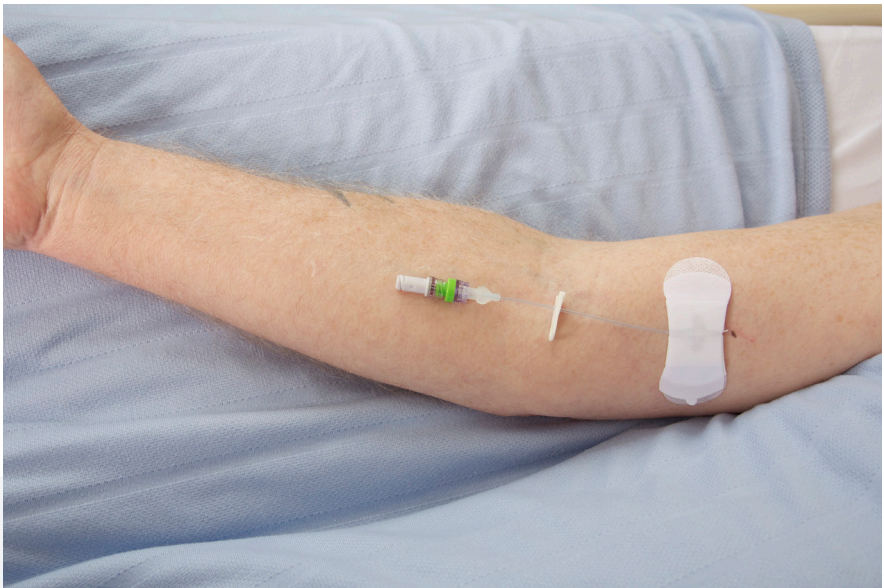


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## **Why do I need a midline?**

Your reason for needing a midline will depend on your medical condition and your treatment plan. A midline can be used to give treatments such as:

- antibiotics
- fluids
- intravenous (IV) treatment at home

## **What are the benefits of a midline?**

A midline can make treatment more comfortable by:

- reducing the irritation that certain drugs can cause to smaller veins
- preserving the health of your vessels
- preventing the need for multiple needle punctures

## **Where will the procedure take place?**

We will perform the procedure in hospital by your bedside, or in a procedure room.

## **What will happen during the procedure?**

A midline insertion is not an operation. It is a simple, sterile procedure that usually takes around 10 to 20 minutes. We will use an ultrasound machine to find a suitable large vein in your upper arm. We will then clean

your arm and cover it with a sterile drape. We will then numb a small area of your arm with a local anaesthetic injection (this may sting briefly before it takes effect).

When the small area of your arm is numb, we will insert the midline through a fine needle into the large vein in your upper arm. You should not experience any pain during this part of the procedure. We will then guide the midline further into your vein until the tip (where the medication enters the bloodstream) sits within the large vein just below your armpit. Once the midline is in the correct place, we will remove the needle. A small section of the midline will remain outside of your body. We will attach this section to your upper arm using a clip (called a Griplik) and clear, adhesive dressing to hold it in place.

## **What will happen after the procedure?**

Once the midline has been fixed in place, we can begin to administer medication.

## **Are there any risks or complications?**

### **Insertion**

It can sometimes be difficult to find a suitable vein, or to get the midline into the correct position. If this is the case, we may have to insert the midline into a different vein, or discuss alternative options with you.

## **Infection**

It is possible for an infection to develop inside or around the place where the midline goes into the vein (this is called the insertion site). An infection can cause the following symptoms:

- pain/redness or swelling at the insertion site
- discoloured fluid coming from the insertion site
- a fever or chills

## **Blood clots (thrombus)**

It is possible for a blood clot to form around the midline. If this occurs, we will give you medication to dissolve the clot and we may need to remove the line.

## **Vein inflammation**

Occasionally, the midline may irritate the vein wall, which can cause pain and redness along the length of the vein.

## **Bruising or bleeding**

It is common to experience some bruising or bleeding at the insertion site. This usually settles after a few hours following midline insertion.

## **A dislodged midline**

Midlines can become dislodged in certain circumstances.

Staff on the ward will check the position of your midline on a daily basis.

### **Damage to surrounding tissues or vessels (nerves and arteries)**

Insertion of a midline can rarely cause damage to surrounding structures in the arm such as arteries or nerves. We will minimise these risks by:

- cleaning your skin around the insertion site with anti-septic solution
- using sterile drapes and equipment
- using ultrasound guidance to locate the vein (this allows us to avoid nerves and arteries)
- inserting the midlines away from the joints

### **When will my midline be removed?**

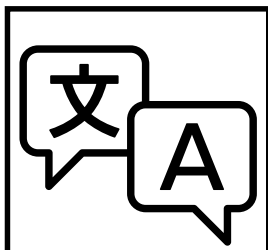
When your treatment has finished, the midline may be removed. This is a simple, quick and painless procedure and is normally performed by a nurse. They will remove the dressings, gently pull out the line, clean the removal site, and cover it with a clean dressing.

### **Summary**

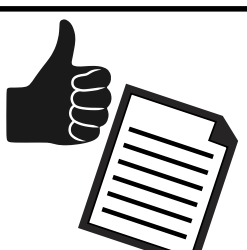
Inserting a midline is usually a safe and effective way of helping your doctor to give you the medication you need. However, complications can occur. You need to

know about them to help you to make an informed decision about the procedure. Knowing about the risks will also help you to help the healthcare team to detect and treat any problems early.

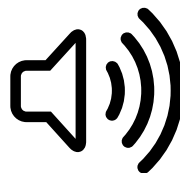
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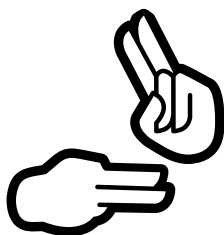
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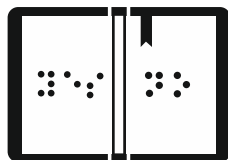
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