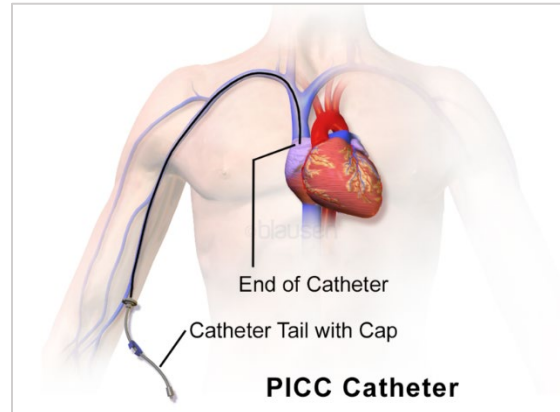


# Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI)

## What is a central line?

A **central line** (also called a central catheter) is a tube that is placed into a large vein, usually in the neck, chest, arm, or groin. The central line is often used to give necessary fluids or medications to help you get better. It may be left in place for several weeks.



## What is a central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI)?

A **central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI)** can happen when bacteria or other germs travel down a central line and enter the blood. If you develop a CLABSI, you may become sick with fevers and chills, or the skin around your central line may become sore and red.

CLABSI is serious, but it can often be successfully treated with antibiotics. Your central line might need to be removed if you develop an infection.

## Will you use my central line to collect blood for tests that my doctor orders?




To reduce the risk of infection, it is best to limit the number of times your central line is used while you are in the hospital. This means if you need blood collected for a test, we may collect it by drawing from your arm and not through your central line (unless your doctor specifically requests this).

## What are some of the things that my doctors and nurses are doing to prevent CLABSI while I am in the hospital?

### If you need a central line inserted:

- We will choose a vein where the central line can be safely inserted and where the risk for infection is small.
- Doctors and nurses clean their hands and wear gloves, masks, caps, sterile (germ-free) gowns, and sterile gloves when putting in your central line.
- We cover you with a sterile sheet while your central line is being inserted.

### If you have a central line in place:

- We will place green caps with alcohol in them on your central line to protect it from germs. 
- Every day, your doctors and nurses will check if your central line is still needed so it can be removed as soon as possible.
- Doctors and nurses clean their hands and wear gloves before giving you medications or changing the bandage that covers the skin where the central line enters your body.
- We will use special cleaning wipes (called **chlorhexidine gluconate wipes, or CHG wipes**) on your skin every day to keep germs on your skin from getting into your central line. 
- We will regularly change the bandage that covers the skin where the central line enters your body. We will also change it bandage if it becomes wet or loose. 

## What can I do to help prevent a CLABSI?

- Ask your doctors and nurses to explain why you need the central line and how long you will have it.

- If the bandage over your central line comes off or becomes wet or dirty, tell your nurse or doctor immediately.
- Complete a daily CHG treatment by letting your nurse or nurse assistant use CHG wipes on your skin.
- Let your nurse or doctor know if the area around your central line is sore or red.
- Do not pick at your central line or the bandage that covers the skin where the central line enters your body.
- Do not let family members and friends who visit you touch the central line or the tubing.

### **What can I do to prevent CLABSI when I go home from the hospital?**

Some people leave the hospital with a central line to continue their treatment. If you go home with a central line, your doctors and nurses will explain everything you need to know about taking care of your central line.

#### **Before you go home, make sure that you:**

- Understand how to care for the central line, including how to change the central line dressing and how to shower or bathe with the central line
- Know who to contact if you have questions or problems after you get home

#### **When caring for your central line, make sure you:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before handling your central line
- Watch for the signs and symptoms of CLABSI, such as soreness or redness at the central line insertion site, or fever. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you notice any of these symptoms.

#### **If you have questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.**

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