

# 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.

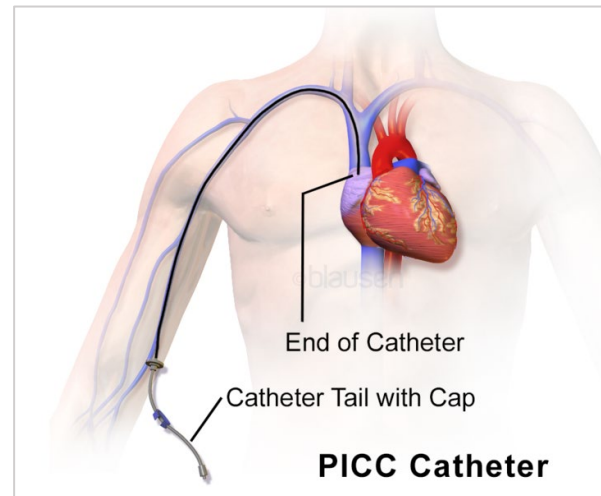
## What is central line-associated bloodstream infection?

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

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

## Will my central line be used to collect blood for tests that my doctor orders?

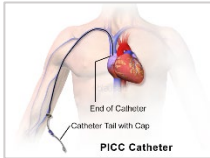
To reduce the risk of infection, it is best practice to limit the number of times your central line is used while you are in the hospital. This means if you need blood collected for a test, it may be collected by drawing from your arm and not through your central line, unless specifically requested by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



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## 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:



A vein is chosen where the central line can be safely inserted and where the risk for infection is small



Doctors and nurses cleanse hands and wear gloves, mask, cap, sterile (germ-free) gown, and sterile gloves when putting in the central line



A sterile sheet is used to cover you while the central line is being put in

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



Green caps with alcohol in them are placed on your central line to protect it from germs



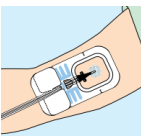
Doctors and nurses assess every day if the central line is still needed so it can be removed as soon as possible



Doctors and nurses cleanse hands and wear gloves prior to giving medications or changing the bandage that covers the skin where the central line enters



Antimicrobial wipes (called chlorhexidine gluconate, or CHG wipes) will be applied to your skin daily to keep germs on your skin from getting into your central line



The bandage that covers the skin where the central line enters will be changed routinely or if the bandage 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.
- Ask your doctors and nurses if they will be using all the prevention methods discussed above.

If you do not see your providers clean their hands, please ask them to do so.

- If the bandage over your central line comes off or becomes wet or dirty, tell your nurse or doctor immediately.
- Inform your nurse or doctor 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.
- Do not let family and friends who visit 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 in order 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. For example, ask for instructions on showering or bathing with the central line and how to change the central line dressing.
- 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 an alcohol-based hand rub 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 any occur.

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

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