

## Removal of Your Tunnelled Line

### Introduction

This leaflet is about the procedure required to remove your tunnelled line (sometimes called a Hickman Line). It is intended to provide you with the information you need before you agree to have the procedure performed. It does not replace discussion between you and your doctor, nurse specialist or practitioner. Please ask all the questions you need to ensure that you fully understand what is involved, before you give your consent for your line to be removed.

### Why am I having my tunnelled line removed?

- It is no longer required
- Infection
- Thrombosis (blood clot)
- Line blockage

If you are unsure about the reasons for the removal of your line, please ask your nurse or doctor.

### Who will remove the line?

A doctor, nurse specialist or trained practitioner will do the procedure. They may be different to the one who recommended the procedure to you, but they will be happy to answer your questions. It is done under local anaesthetic, so you will remain awake. You can eat and drink before and after the procedure.

### Will I need a blood test?

A recent blood tests will be required to ensure that your blood will clot properly after the procedure.

### How is the tunnelled line removed?

A date and time will be arranged for you to attend.

As the line is designed not to fall out, it has a cuff which adheres to the underneath layer of skin. The line will need to be gently released. The area of skin around the cuff will be cleaned and then local anaesthetic (lidocaine) is injected to numb the area. This does sting momentarily and works quickly. The practitioner will make a small cut in your skin. This will allow the cuff to be loosened. You may feel a bit of pressure but it will not hurt. Once the cuff is freed, the line will come out easily. Pressure will be applied to where the line went into the vein in your neck for about 10 minutes. You will have 2-3 stitches in your skin. You will be asked to rest on the bed for 1 hour. A dressing will cover the wound. It can be changed and replaced with a new dressing if necessary. This dressing must be kept clean and dry. If you are unsure how to change this dressing, please discuss this with a nurse. Once the stitches are removed, no dressing is required.

### How long it will take?

It is not easy to predict how easy or complicated the procedure will be. This is influenced by how easy it is to free the cuff underneath your skin. Usually the whole procedure will take about 20-30 minutes.

### When and who will remove the stitches?

The stitches should be removed after 5-7 days. A qualified nurse such as practice nurse (at the GP), community nurse or nurses at the hospital can remove them. You will need to book this in advance at a date and time convenient to you.

# What should I look out for?

## Bleeding

A little spot of blood on the dressing is to be expected. If the dressing becomes full with blood, or there is any neck swelling apply gentle pressure and please contact your nurse/doctor.

## Redness/soreness

When the local anaesthetic wears off, the area may feel and look a bit bruised. Please discuss what pain relief may be best for this with your nurse/doctor.

## Swelling/discharge

A small amount of puffiness after the removal is to be expected. If there is any increased swelling or discharge, please contact your GP, doctor or nurse at the hospital.

# What should I not do?

Because of infection, when bathing, a shallow bath is recommended to avoid the water touching the area, showering is fine. If the dressing becomes wet, it should be replaced with a clean dry one. Once the stitches are removed, you may resume your normal bathing.

## Contact us:

If you have any queries or concerns about the procedure, or have not understood something you have been told, please do not hesitate to ring us.

Monday-Friday (except bank holidays) 9am-5pm, please contact The Vascular Access Team on **01392 406427**. All other times please contact your care team on the number they provide.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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