

# Discharge Instructions: Administering IV Antibiotics



Your healthcare provider prescribed home IV (intravenous) antibiotics for you. These are medicines that help your body fight infection. They work best when given by IV. Before starting your IV care, always gather and inspect your supplies. And be sure to let your provider know of any allergies you may have. You were shown how to give your IV antibiotics in the hospital. The information below may help you remember the steps when you're at home. Always contact your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you may have.

The name of your IV antibiotic is \_\_\_\_\_

## General guidelines

- Follow the fact sheet that comes with your medicine. It tells you when and how to take your medicine. Ask for a sheet if you didn't get one.
- Be aware of any warnings and side effects.
- Check the medicine label before starting an IV. Make sure your name, the medicine name, and the dose are correct.
- Don't use medicine with an expired date or with particles in it.
- Don't use an IV bag with cracks or tears.
- Be sure all IV supplies are in sealed packets. If any sterile packets are open, throw away those supplies.
- Store the antibiotic in a cool, dark place. Refrigerate it, if the package instructs you to.
- Before using the antibiotic, let it get close to room temperature. Don't heat it.
- Run the IV as often as prescribed.
- After you finish using the IV antibiotics, read about how to flush and care for your catheter. Ask your healthcare provider to demonstrate, if needed. Also ask for more information, if needed.
- Put all used needles and syringes in a sharps box. This is a puncture-proof container used for throwing away sharp objects. Be sure you get one with your supplies.
- When the IV is done, put the used supplies in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and throw it in the trash.
- Talk with your healthcare provider to be sure you know what to do if there is any extra medicine left over.
- Also talk with your provider about how to stop treatment in the middle if needed.

## IV setup

- Before starting, review material on how to recognize symptoms of an infection at an IV site.
- Clean your work area before setting up for IV care. Use alcohol or soap and water.
- Put supplies on a clean cloth or on a fresh paper towel.
- Wash your hands with warm water and liquid soap. Scrub for 1 minute. Wash between your fingers. Rinse well.

- Dry your hands with a fresh paper towel and use it to turn off the water.
- Wipe all injection sites with alcohol prep before injection.
- Hang the IV bag. The drip chamber should be at least 18 inches above your head.
- Clean the catheter port (injection site) with an alcohol wipe as often as directed.
- Flush the catheter with saline or heparin as directed.
- Attach the IV tubing to your catheter and secure with tape.
- Start the medicine as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Be sure all IV supplies are in sealed packets.
- If germ-free (sterile) packets are open, throw away those supplies.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider or home health nurse right away if you have any of the following:

- Rash or hives
- Fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher, or chills
- Redness near the site where the catheter (tube) exits or at any spot along your catheter line
- Swelling or pain in your arm, neck, or chest near the catheter line.
- Drainage from where the catheter exits the skin
- A catheter that slips or comes out
- IV fluid that doesn't flow well through the tubing
- Leaking from anywhere along the catheter

## Call 911

Call 911 if you have any of the following:

- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain

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