

What is an Implantable Port?

An implantable port is a device that is placed within the body and used to deliver fluids or medication into the bloodstream. These ports are usually placed under the skin on the upper part of the chest wall. All implantable ports consist of a small chamber (the “port”) and a catheter. The port has an area of self-sealing silicone rubber in the center called the septum. The catheter is a flexible hollow tube. One end of the catheter is securely attached to the port, and the other end is placed into a large vein.

Why do I need an Implantable Port?

Your treatment includes fluids or medications that need to be delivered into the bloodstream on a regular basis. Your port will be used to deliver these prescribed agents into your bloodstream. Also, your port is used to withdraw the blood samples needed to monitor your progress.

How is the Port Implanted?

This is a brief procedure that is performed under local anesthesia and conscious sedation. Usually, x-rays are taken during the procedure to help the doctor place the port precisely. The doctor makes a small incision to create a space or “pocket” for the port under the skin where the port is to be placed. The port is placed under the skin and the catheter is placed within a nearby vein. The incision is stitched closed and kept covered with a small bandage until it has completely healed, which usually takes a few days. You will be given a Medical Alert Card that contains important information about your Implantable Port which you should keep with you at all times.

How is the Implantable Port used?

To deliver needed fluid or medication through your implantable port, a small needle will be inserted through the skin and into the septum of the port. This is a specially designed “non-coring” needle that will not damage the port. You will feel only a slight “pricking” sensation as it passes through the skin into the port. The fluids or medication is connected to this needle and administered. Once your treatment or administration of fluids is complete, the port will be flushed with a solution and the needle removed. A small bandage may be placed over the port site.

What care is required after the Implantable Port is inserted?

You will be given specific instructions about how to care for your bandage and what to do if a problem arises. After your incision has healed, there is not special care of the area required. Your port may be left in place indefinitely. However, it must be flushed monthly if not used. In most instances, your nurse, phlebotomist, or home healthcare provider will flush your port.