

Home Antibiotic Therapy

What are antibiotics?

You require antibiotics to treat an infection within your body. Antibiotics are drugs that destroy or slow the growth of the harmful microorganisms that cause infection.

What is intravenous medication?

The antibiotics needed for the type of infection you have must be given intravenously. Intravenously means that the medication is given directly into the vein instead of being taken by mouth. The intravenous antibiotics reach your bloodstream through a specially designed tube called a catheter. This catheter can be inserted into one of the surface veins of your hand or forearm. This small catheter is temporary. When needed, a nurse will remove the old catheter and place a new one into a different vein.

Frequently, a central venous access device such as a peripherally inserted central catheter, or PICC, is used. This is a catheter that is placed in one of your larger veins and can be used for longer periods without being replaced.

What is home antibiotic therapy?

Your doctor has arranged for you to receive home antibiotic therapy, so that you can be home and still receive the medication you need. Your doctor is confident that you and your family will learn to safely administer the medication, so that you may stay at home in more comfortable surroundings. Your doctor and home care nurses may have already begun teaching you about home antibiotic therapy. Your home care nurse will continue this teaching in your home. Your nurse will come to your home to care for the site of your catheter, as needed, or to teach you how to care for your permanent catheter. You will also learn how to prepare and administer your antibiotic. The following guidelines will help you learn these skills.

What to do if a rash or itch occur?

In general, mild allergic reactions to antibiotics are rash or itching, usually starting on the middle of the body. **Any reaction due to an antibiotic needs to be reported to your home care nurse, home care pharmacist and/or doctor right away.** The antibiotic should be stopped and the line flushed until you receive further instructions. The IU Health Home Care pharmacist will provide specific information related to the drug you are taking if there are other side effects you should watch for.

If more severe allergic reactions occur such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911.

How do I receive my medication?

IU Health Home Care will make arrangements for your medications, supplies and equipment to be delivered to your home. The home care nurse and pharmacist will keep your doctor informed about your progress. In addition, your home care nurse is available to ensure that you understand your therapy and are skillful in its use. **Remember, the goal is for you and your family to become as independent as possible in the use of home antibiotic therapy.**

Common supplies with multiple names:

Elastomeric device: home pump, medication ball

Saline flush: normal saline flush, NS, 0.9% sodium chloride injection, white cap flush

Heparin flush: blue cap

Needleless connector: IV cap, IV connector, white cap

What is an elastomeric device?

The elastomeric device is a medication container and infusion delivery device in one unit. Your medication has been premixed, placed in the elastomeric device then preserved, usually by refrigeration. **Store all medications in your refrigerator or at room temperature, as directed on the label of your medication.**

- **Check the label** of each elastomeric device for your name, the name and volume of the medication, the expiration date of the medication and storage of the medication.
- **Check for leaks and particulate matter** in every device before each infusion. If the device is leaking or anything looks different than usual, use another elastomeric device and save the damaged device for review by your IU Health Home Care pharmacist.
- Each elastomeric device must be at room temperature for infusion for comfort and the most accurate infusion time. One to four hours prior to each infusion, remove one elastomeric device from your refrigerator for your next scheduled dose and allow it to warm to room temperature. **Do not heat or microwave.**
- Use each elastomeric device only once.
- When filled, the medication in the chamber may not be completely full.

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Administering Intravenous Medications by Elastomeric Device

Complete these sections with your home care nurse for the first infusion.

Supplies needed:

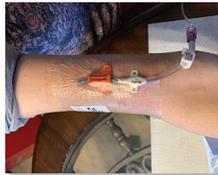
- Medication in elastomeric device
- Alcohol preps
- ___milliliter prefilled saline flush
- ___milliliter prefilled ___ unit heparin flush

- 1 Clean your workspace. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands.**



- 2 Inspect your IV site for:**

- Redness
- Swelling
- Tenderness
- Warmth



If the condition of your IV site has changed, do not infuse. Call your home care nurse or pharmacist.

- 3 Inspect the elastomeric device and its label.**

- Are specks visible inside the device?
- Does the medication look cloudy?
- Is it the correct medication?
- Has the medication expired?
- Is the device intact?



- 4 Check to be sure the clamp on the elastomeric device tubing is closed.**



- 5 If air is seen in tubing, open the clamp on the elastomeric device tubing.**

Loosen the cover at the end of the tubing until fluid has reached the end, retighten the cover and then close the clamp.



- 6 Prepare prefilled flushes by holding the syringe straight up and down with the protective cover at the top.**



- 7 Pull down on the plunger until you feel the seal break.**



- 8 Remove the cover.**

Do not touch the inside of the cover or the tip of the syringe. If touched, get a new one.



- 9 Push up on the plunger to push the air out then replace the cover.**
Repeat for other two flushes.



- 10** Scrub the needleless connector of your catheter with an alcohol prep pad with friction for 15 seconds. Let dry.



- 15** When the elastomeric device is empty, clamp the elastomeric device tubing then remove it by unscrewing it from your needleless connector.

Dispose of the elastomeric device in regular trash.



- 11** Open the clamp on your IV line. Twist off the end cap of the flush syringe and attach ___ milliliter saline flush by pushing and twisting the flush into the needleless connector.



- Flush with the saline
- Remove flush syringe

If you feel resistance, check for clamps or kinks and try again. If still won't flush, call your home care nurse or pharmacist.

- 16** Scrub the needleless connector of your catheter with a new alcohol pad with friction for 15 seconds. Let dry.



- 17** Remove cap from ___ milliliter saline flush. Open clamp and flush your line.



- 12** Scrub the needleless connector of your catheter with a new alcohol pad with friction for 15 seconds. Let dry.



Connect the elastomeric device tubing to your line after removing the cap.

- 18** Remove syringe. Scrub the needleless connector of your catheter with an alcohol pad with friction for 15 seconds. Let dry.



Attach the ___ milliliter ___ unit heparin flush and flush fluid through your line.

- 13** Open the clamp on the IV tubing to begin the infusion. Note the time and set an alarm for _____ minutes.



During infusion, place the elastomeric device:

- On the table, or
- In your shirt pocket, or
- In your elastomeric device carry bag

- 19** Remove syringe. Close your IV clamp.



- 14** The infusion should take approximately ___ minutes.

There is no alarm to signal the end of the infusion. You must look at the elastomeric device to see that the membrane is empty.

If you can still feel a "bubble" of fluid let it continue to infuse a few more minutes until no "bubble" is felt.

Hint: remember "SASH" flushing

S ___ milliliter Saline flush

A ___ Administer antibiotic

S ___ milliliter Saline flush

H ___ milliliter Heparin flush

Any questions, call IU Health Home Care:

Home Infusion Pharmacy: 317.962.4745

Bloomington: 812.353.3104

Indianapolis: 317.962.4600 or 800.258.9530

Lafayette: 765.838.5750

Muncie: 765.747.3009



Indiana University Health

iuhealth.org/HomeInfusion