

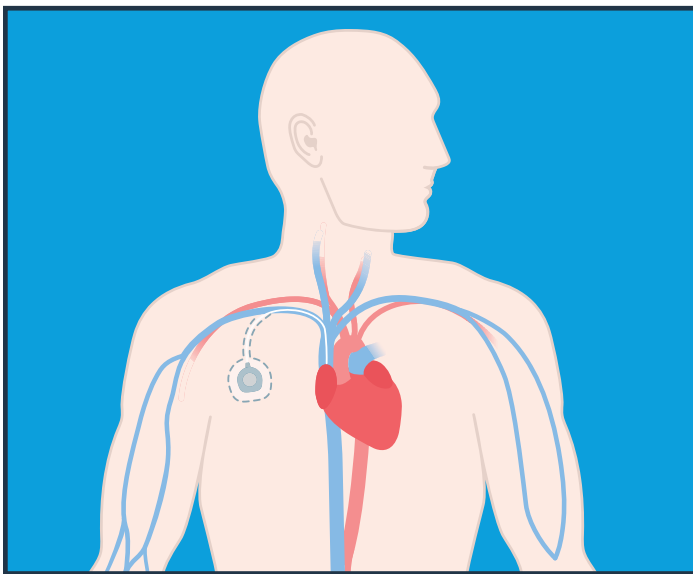
IMPLANTED PORT

An implanted port (also called an *implantable venous access port*) is a common choice for people with cancer. The port is placed under the skin of the chest or arm during surgery. The port is a small drum made of plastic or metal, with a thin tube (called a *line*) going into a large vein. The drum is covered with a self-sealing membrane (called a *septum*) made of silicone.

To use the port, a nurse sticks special needle through the skin and into the port's septum. Ports can be removed when treatment is done, or they can be left in place for months or years.

Single and double ports are available. A single port is shown in the picture below; a double port looks like 2 drums attached to each other. Some brand names of ports include Port-A-Cath, BardPort, PassPort, Mediport, and Infusaport.

CARING FOR AN IMPLANTED PORT



Once the port is inserted and the incision heals, the skin around it does not require any special care. You can bathe, shower, or even swim. Your cancer care team will tell you when it is OK to do these things.

When a port is used for treatment or to draw blood, a special needle (called a *non-coring needle*) is used to access the port through the skin. This will hurt a little since it is a needle going through your skin.

When it is not being used, you will likely need to have the port flushed. The frequency of these flushes will be determined by your physician. This involves using the special non-coring needle to access the port and flushing some fluid through it. This regular flushing is sometimes called *maintenance flushing*. It is done so the port and catheter inside stay open and clear in case you need to use it again.