

# Extravasation



Intra Venous Therapy Department

SIGN-OFF

You have received this information leaflet because we believe that the medicine that you have been receiving into your vein has caused a problem called extravasation.

## What is extravasation?

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Extravasation is the accidental leakage of drugs outside of the vein and into the surrounding skin and areas. This can lead to an immediate painful reaction and may result in local skin damage. You may have noticed pain; stinging, swelling or other changes to the skin at the site of drug administration, or your nurse may have noticed that the drug was not flowing in easily.

## Why did this happen?

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Extravasation is a rare but known complication of intravenous therapy. It is impossible to entirely prevent this even though we take all possible precautions. The important thing is that it has been detected and treated.

## Why is extravasation a problem?

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It can lead to pain, stiffness and tissue damage.

## What treatment have I received to prevent tissue damage?

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Your nurse has given you the recommended treatment for the extravasation this will have included cooling and elevating the area. Although this will help to minimise the chance of developing further problems, you will need to keep checking the area every day. If you are no longer in hospital and you are concerned please come to Accident and Emergency.

**You may have had some hydrocortisone 1% cream applied to the area to further decrease swelling and pain. You may stop this at any time if you feel that it is no longer needed. If however, you are still using it after 7 days, please come to Accident and Emergency so that you can be reviewed.**

## Checking the area

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Once a day, check the area for the following:

- Has the area changed colour or increased in redness?
- Is the area blistering, peeling or flaking?
- Is the area more uncomfortable?
- Is the pain making it difficult for you to exercise the arm or hand?

## When should I contact the hospital?

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If you answered YES to any of the questions in the checklist above, or if you have any other concerns, then you should inform the nursing staff on your ward or if you have been discharged access medical advice through Accident and Emergency.

## What else do I need to do?

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- Gently exercise the affected arm or hand.
- Take mild painkillers if required.
- Do not apply any other lotions, creams or ointments unless you have been instructed to do so by a doctor or nurse.
- Do not expose the area to strong sunlight.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing around the affected area.
- Protect the affected area when bathing (or having a shower) so that it does not get wet.



## Contact details

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### **Intra-Venous therapy department**

Royal Surrey County Hospital Foundation Trust  
Egerton Road  
Guilford  
Surrey  
GU2 7XX

Tel: 01483 571122 ext. 4781

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### **PALS and Advocacy contact details**

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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