

# Information for patients and parents after leakage of medicine under the skin (extravasation or infiltration)

## Introduction

You have been given this leaflet because you or your child has had a problem with medicine leaking out of a drip and under the skin. This is called **extravasation** or **infiltration**. This leaflet explains what this means and what you need to do at home. It does not replace talking with your nurse or doctor, but it can help you remember what was discussed.

## What is extravasation or infiltration?

This happens when medicine given through a drip (into a vein) leaks out of the vein and goes into the nearby skin and tissue. Some medicines can irritate the skin and/or the volume can cause pain or damage.

You or your child may have noticed pain or stinging, swelling, redness or skin changes. Or the nurse may have noticed the drip was not running properly.

## Why did this happen?

This is an uncommon but known problem with drips. Even though staff check drips carefully and monitor them often, this can still happen.

## Why is it a problem?

The effects depend on the type and amount of medicine that leaked. Possible problems include: pain, swelling or stiffness, skin damage or sores like ulcers.

Treatment was given straight away to reduce any harm. Most areas heal well without any more treatment. Very rarely, surgery may be needed. In this situation, the medical team will explain everything to you.

## What treatment was given?

The nursing and medical team has given you/ your child the recommended treatment for the leaked medicine. This helps reduce further problems and helps healing, but the area can change over time. You must check the area every day.

The medicine which leaked was: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

This medicine is (circle one):  
cytotoxic / higher risk / lower risk

**Treatment given:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### What parents and carers need to do at home:

Check the area once a day – you may wish to take a photo each day - and ask the following questions:

- Is the skin more red or a different colour?
- Are there blisters, peeling or flaky skin?
- Does the area feel hot?
- Is it more painful than before?
- Is the pain stopping you/your child from moving their arm, hand or foot properly?

If you answer '**yes**' to any of these, or are worried for any reason, contact the team caring for your child (phone numbers are below).

### What else do I need to do?

- Gently move and exercise the affected arm, hand or foot.
- Take mild pain relief if needed.
- Use a **cold pack** for 15-20 minutes every eight hours if the area is sore (usually day one -two).
- **Do not** use any lotions, creams or ointments, unless told to by a doctor or nurse.
- Keep the area out of strong sunlight.
- Avoid tight clothing around the area.
- Keep the area dry when bathing or showering.
- Raise the hand or arm on a pillow to reduce swelling.

Extra advice from your treatment team:

---

---

---

### Follow-up appointments

You may need to return to hospital so the area can be checked. For more serious cases, this may be after 24 hours, after three days, after seven days, and then weekly.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_

## Department address and contact information:

Paediatric Department - University Hospitals Birmingham

Heartlands Hospital – Ward 15, 16 and High Dependency Unit (HDU)

Tel: 0121 424 2216 or 0121 424 0515

Heartlands Hospital – Ward 14 and assessment area

Tel: 0121 424 2214

Good Hope Hospital – Harvey Ward and assessment area

Tel: 0121 424 9708 or 0121 424 7206

## Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use text-to-speech reader visit **[www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk)**, click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille, please email [interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk).



## How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. **Thank you.** [www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft)

