

Glossary

Analgesic: A drug that relieves pain.

Antimicrobial: An agent that kills microorganisms or stops their growth.

Catheter: A small, flexible tube that is inserted through the skin into a large vein. In this case, it is a central venous catheter. Its purpose is to give medicines, fluids, nutrients, or blood products over a long period of time, usually several weeks or more.

Clean gloves: Gloves that are made of thin rubber (latex or nonlatex) that are used to help reduce the risk of microorganisms. They are made for single use and typically come in a box of 100.

Flow rate: The amount of fluid that flows in a given time. Intravenous fluid must be given at a specific rate, neither too fast nor too slow. The specific rate may be measured as mL/hour or drops/min. To control or adjust the flow rate, drops per minute are used.

Flushing: Rinsing. You need to rinse the inside of the catheter after each use. Flushing helps keep the catheter clean. It also prevents blood clots from blocking the catheter tip.

Negative pressure: Flowing in reverse.

Occlusive dressing: A protective dressing that seals a wound to prevent contact with air or moisture. It may consist of a sheet of thin plastic sealed on all sides.

Parenteral nutrition: A special liquid food mixture given into the blood through an IV catheter. The mixture contains proteins, carbohydrates (sugars), fats, vitamins, and minerals (such as calcium). This special mixture may be called parenteral nutrition (PN) or total parenteral nutrition (TPN).

Peripheral veins: The smaller veins in your arms, hands, legs, and feet.

Prime: The process of running the fluids through the tubing so that there is no air in the tubing.

Spike: Inserting a sharp, hard plastic “spike” into a bag containing fluid.

Sterile gloves: Gloves that are sterile and packaged as a single pair. The packaging keeps the gloves completely free of any microorganisms (germs).

Topical cream: A cream applied directly to the “top” of your skin.