

WHAT IS AN IV?

IV BASICS



An IV is a catheter, or small straw, that helps the medical team give you fluids or medicine and to draw blood if needed. The catheter goes in a vein on either your arm or your hand. A small needle inside the catheter helps guide it to the right place. The needle comes out after the poke.

STEP ONE

A tourniquet, or rubber band, will be tied around your arm. This will feel tight but helps your nurse find the best spot for your IV. Your nurse may tie the tourniquet in a few different places before choosing where to place the IV.



STEP TWO

Once your nurse has chosen where to place the IV, they will clean the area with a cold, wet sponge to get rid of any germs on your skin.

STEP THREE

Your nurse will use a needle to poke your skin and guide the catheter into your vein. Once the catheter is in place, the needle comes out.



STEP FOUR

Now your nurse will push salt water through your IV catheter. This is called "flushing" your IV. This may make your arm feel cold and you might taste or smell something. Your nurse will use this IV to give you fluids or medicine.

STEP FIVE

Your IV will be taped in place. If it's in a spot where your arm or wrist bends, you might get a board to keep it secure. You might also be hooked up to a pump that pushes fluids or medicine into your IV.



COPING

While getting an IV can be stressful, there are many ways to make the process easier.

Relax your body.

While it may seem difficult, keeping your body relaxed will help keep your veins from tensing up, making the IV easier.

- Take deep breaths, counting to 5 as you inhale and then counting to 5 as you exhale
- Listen to music or watch a video
- Imagine how your body feels when you are relaxed
 - Where are you?
 - What are you doing?
 - Who are you with?

Tell the medical team what might help you feel more comfortable.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would you like to sit up or lay down?
- Would you like a support person to sit next to you or hold your hand?
- Does it help you to watch the procedure or to look away?
- Would you like a 1-2-3 countdown before the poke?

Use pain management tools.

- Buzzy is a vibrating bee that is held against your skin right above the area your IV will be placed
- The vibration distracts your brain from the poke and may help so that you do not feel it as much
- Let your nurse know if you would like to use Buzzy