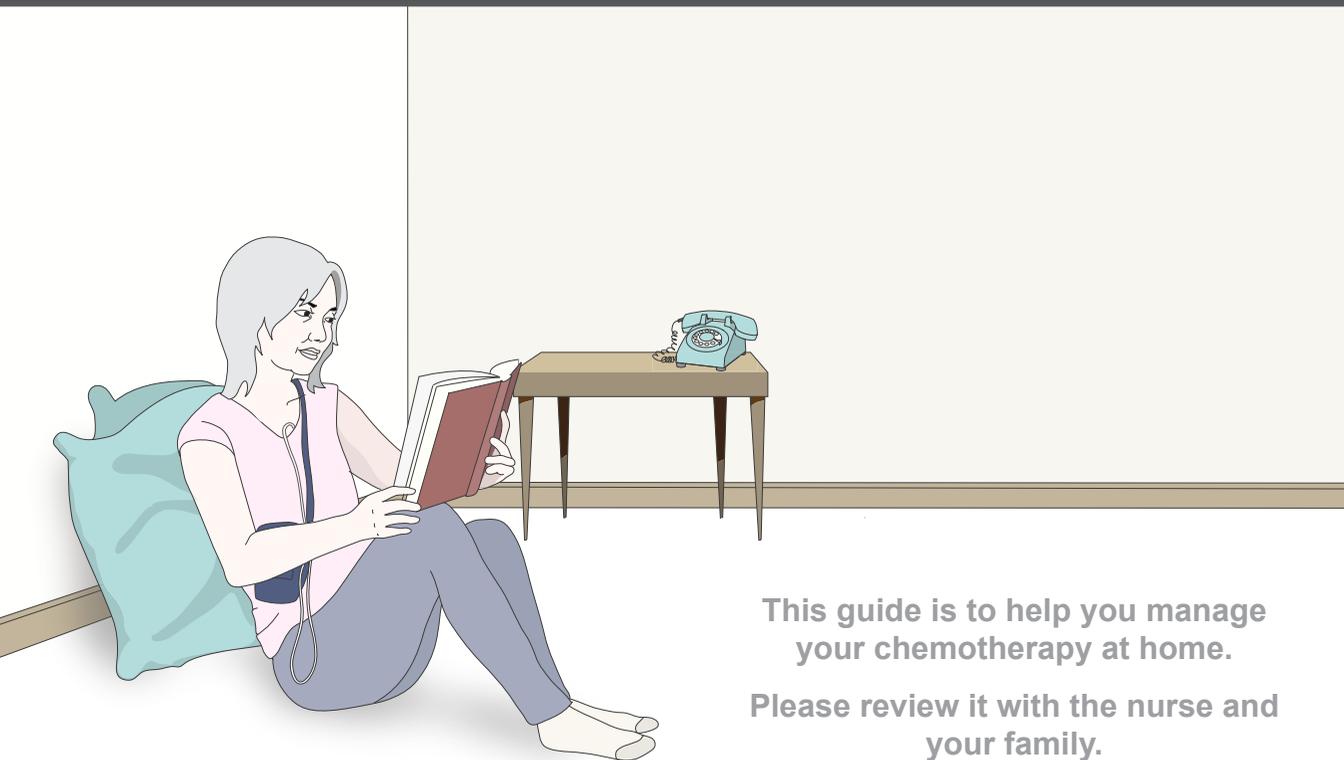


# Going Home with a Chemotherapy Infuser: What I Need to Know



This guide is to help you manage  
your chemotherapy at home.  
Please review it with the nurse and  
your family.

This document was developed by the Oncology Day Centre team at the Montreal General Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital.

We would like to thank the MUHC Patient Education Office for their support throughout the development of this material, including the writing, the design, layout, as well as for the creation of all the images.

We would also like to thank the MUHC Patient Education Committee for translation and printing support for this project.

© Copyright 4 November 2016, McGill University Health Centre. 2nd edition. This document is copyrighted. Reproduction in whole or in part without express written permission from [patienteducation@muhc.mcgill.ca](mailto:patienteducation@muhc.mcgill.ca) is strictly prohibited.



## IMPORTANT

**Information provided by this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.**

Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



McGill University  
Health Centre

Office d'éducation des patients  
Patient Education Office



This material is also available through the  
MUHC Patient Education Office website  
[www.muhcpatienteducation.ca](http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)

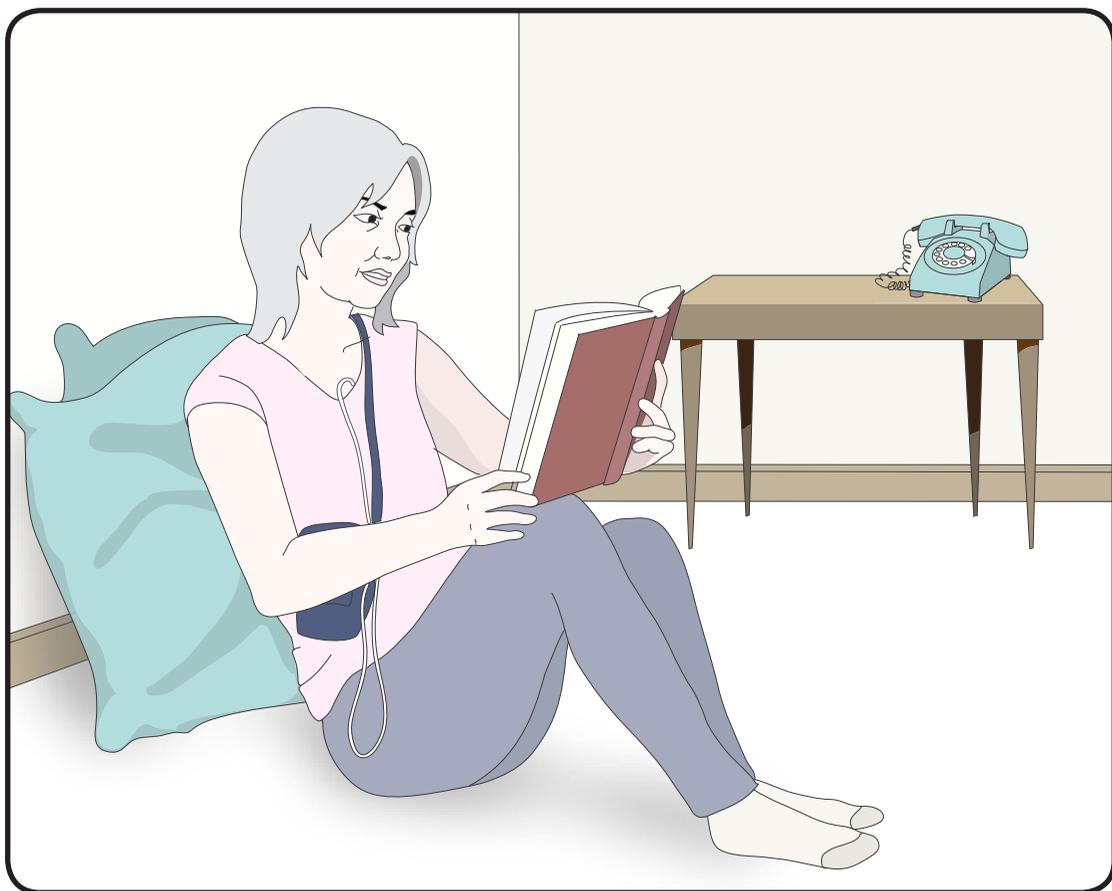


# Table of Contents

Why am I having my chemotherapy this way?	5
What is an infuser?	6
How does the infuser work?	7
What can I do to make sure my infuser is working well?	9
How do I check my catheter site?	17
How often do I check my infuser?	21
Is it possible for my chemotherapy to leak?	22
What happens when my chemotherapy is finished?	23
When do I ask for help?	24
Do`s & Dont`s	26
Notes	28
Hospital map	31
Looking for more information on cancer?	back cover

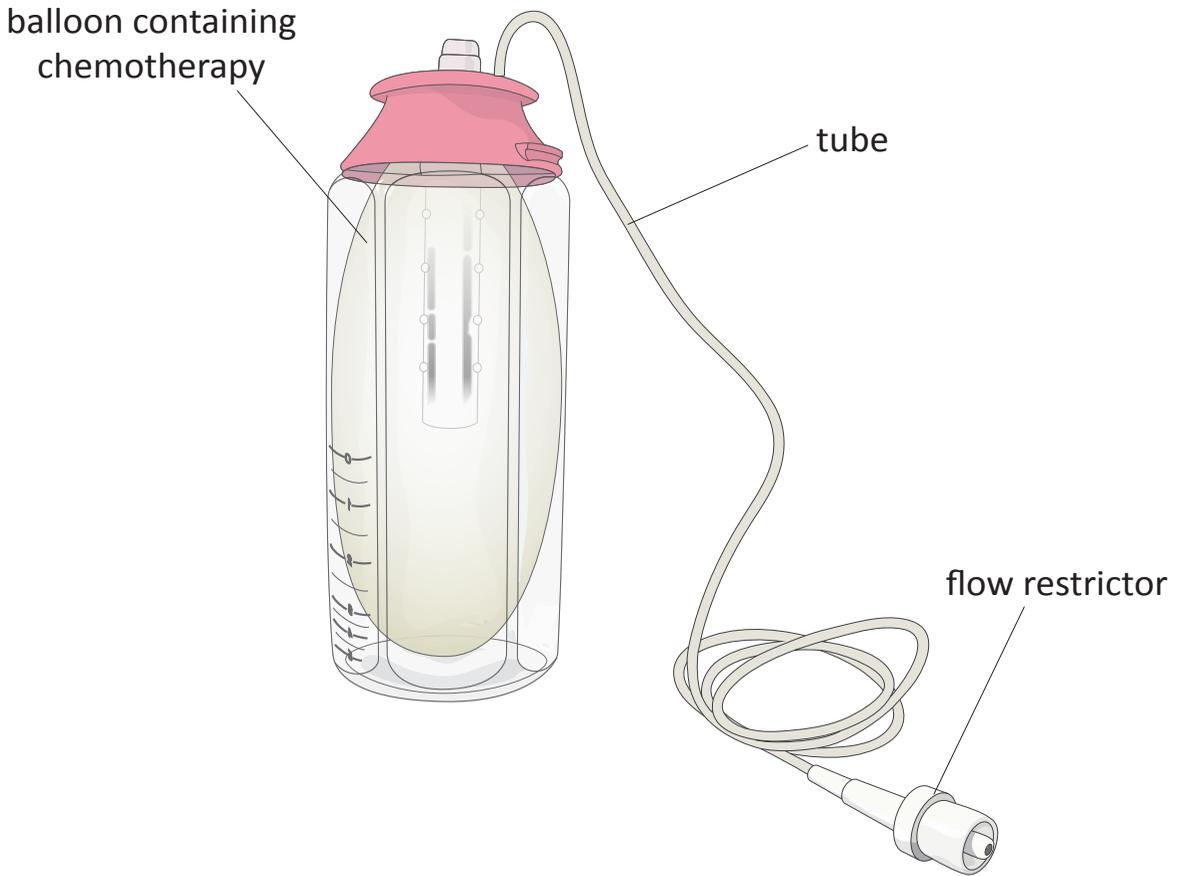


# Why am I having my chemotherapy this way?



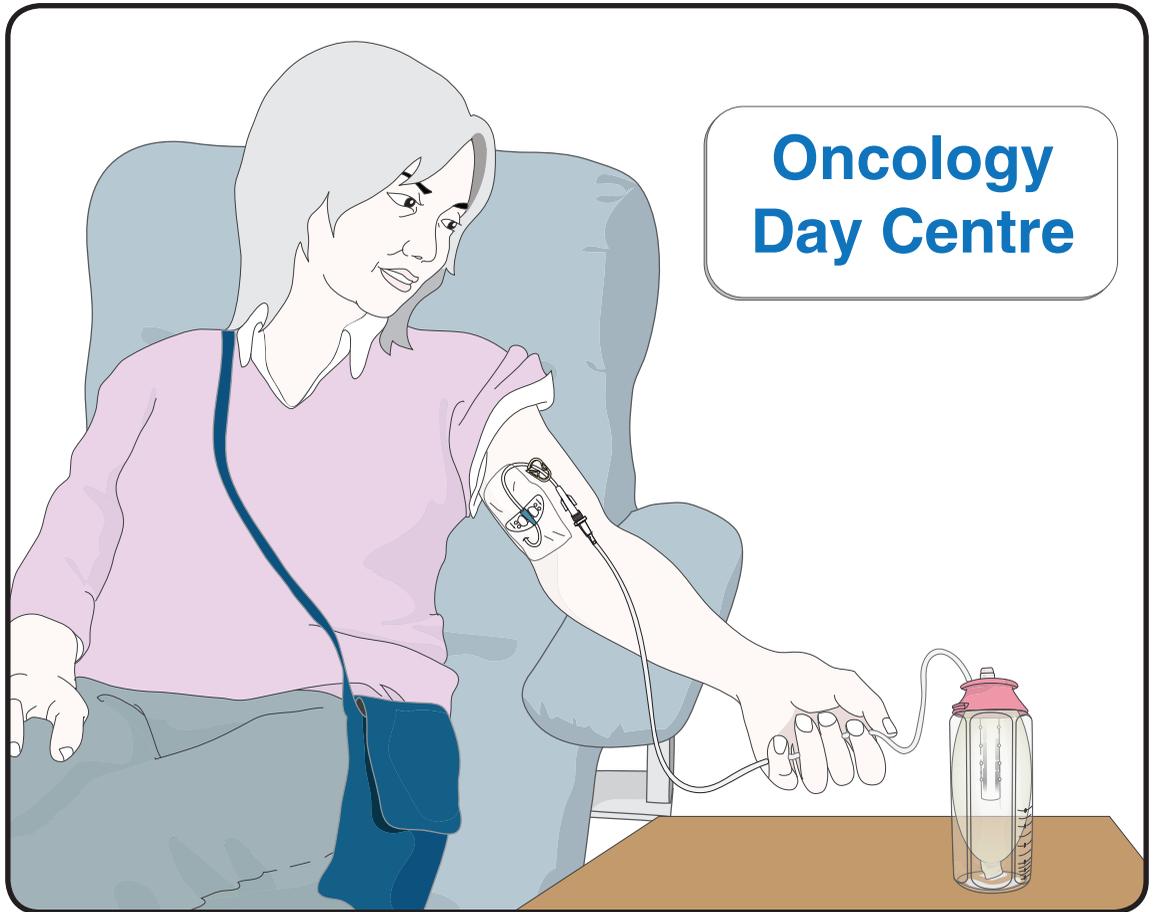
Your treatment involves receiving chemotherapy in your veins over several days. Having chemotherapy with an infuser allows you to be at home instead of in the hospital. It is a safe and more comfortable way to receive your chemotherapy.

# What is an infuser?

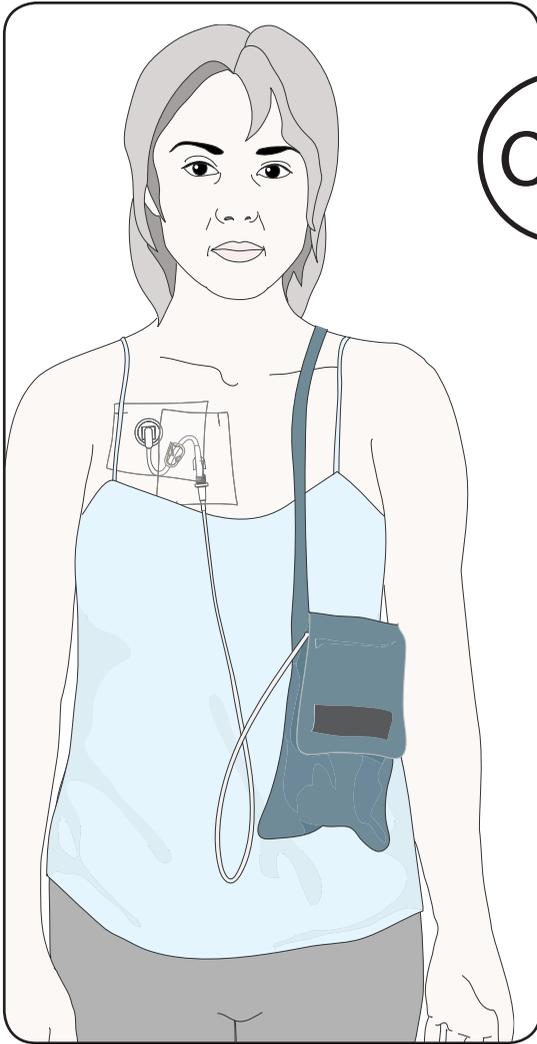


An infuser is a small pump. It looks like a baby bottle with a balloon inside it. The balloon is filled with chemotherapy. There is a long thin tube coming out of one side. The balloon will slowly squeeze the chemotherapy through the tube. It does this at a set rate controlled by the flow restrictor at the end of the tube.

# How does the infuser work?

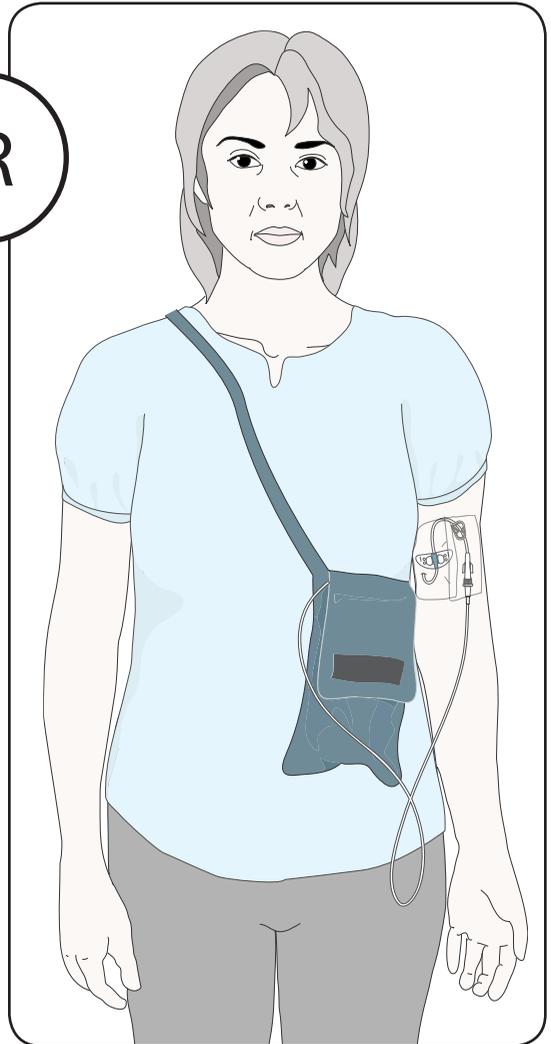


When the tube is connected to your catheter, your chemotherapy flows into your vein. The nurse at the Oncology Day Centre will connect the tube to your catheter. Then, your chemotherapy will infuse over the next few days while you are at home.



Port

OR



PICC

There are two types of catheters which may be used with an infuser. Your chemotherapy can be given through a **Port** in your chest or a **PICC** line in your arm. Your doctor will decide which catheter is right for you.

# What can I do to make sure my infuser is working well?



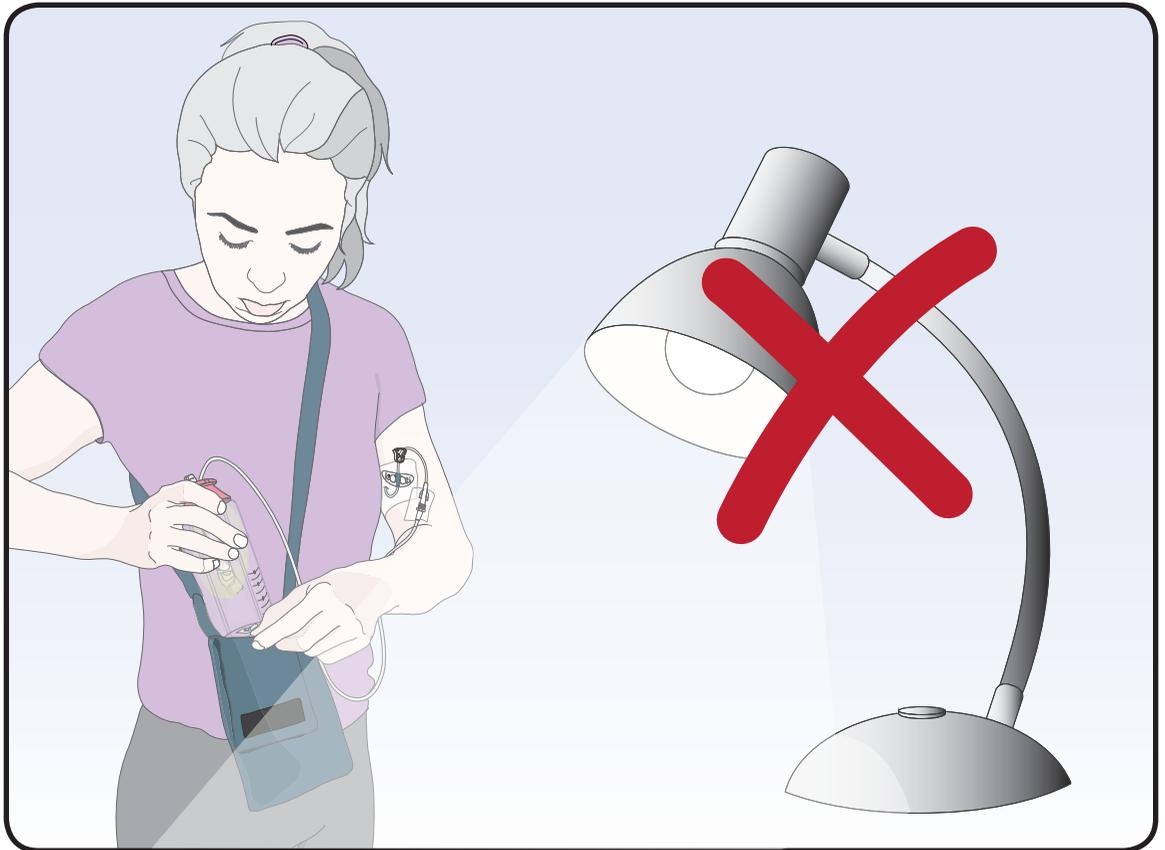
Keep the infuser in its carrying bag.



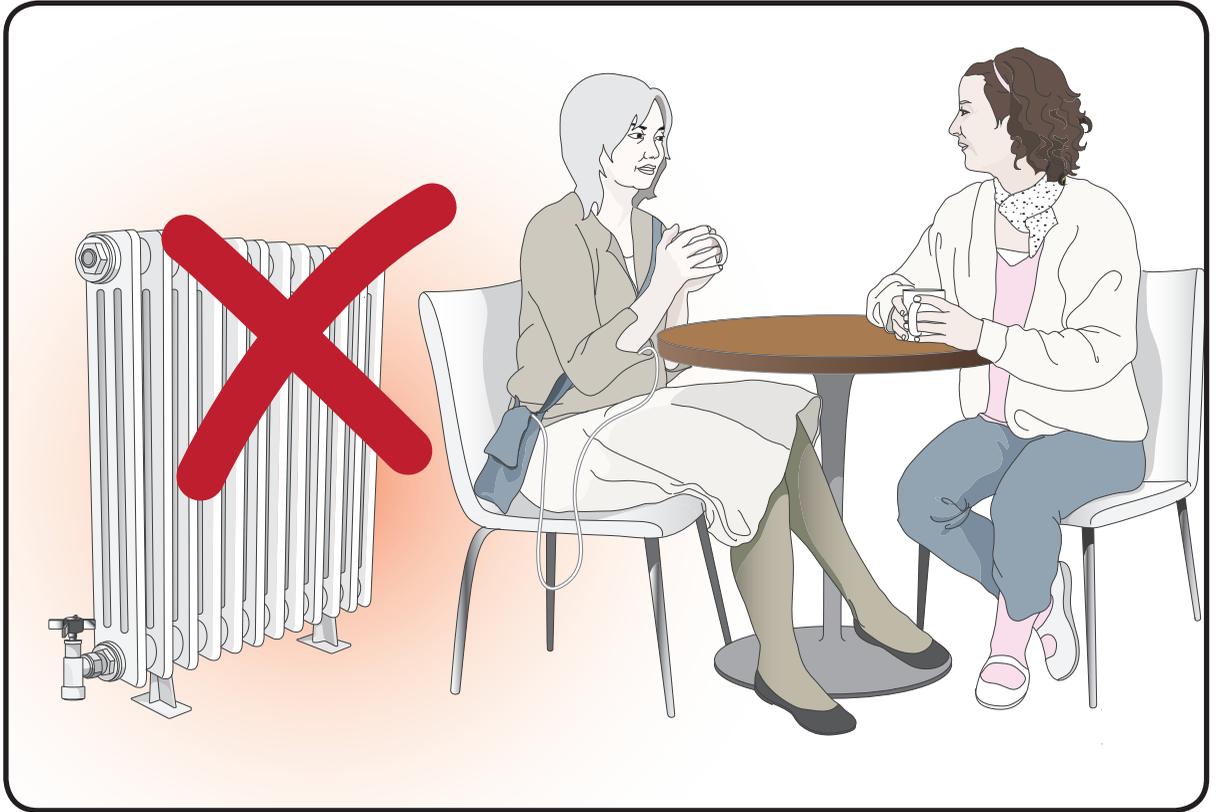
Keep the infuser as close to the level of the Port or PICC site as possible. If it is too high, it will infuse too quickly. If it is too low, it will infuse too slowly.



When you sleep at night, keep the infuser in bed near you. Do not place it on the floor or on a high night table. You do not need to worry about the exact position of the infuser in your bed, it will run even if it is upside-down or sideways.



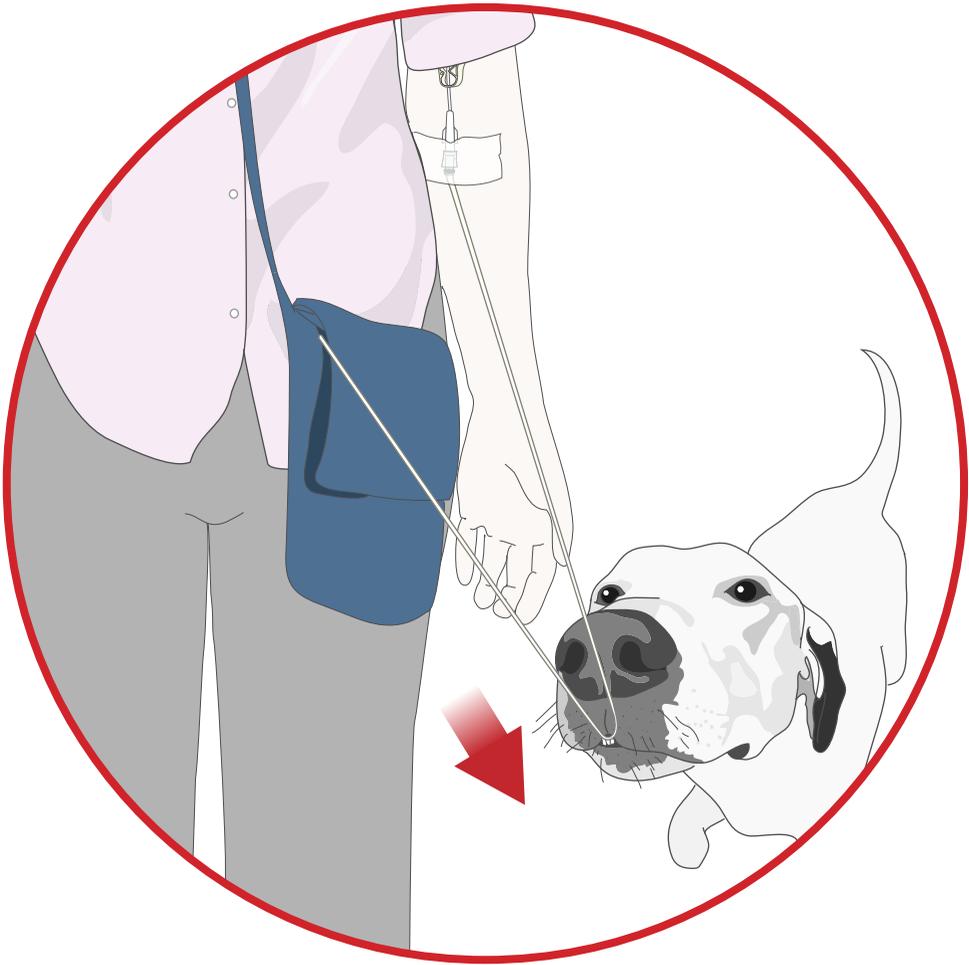
Protect the infuser from light. The chemotherapy is sensitive to light and could be affected if it is exposed.



Keep the infuser at room temperature.

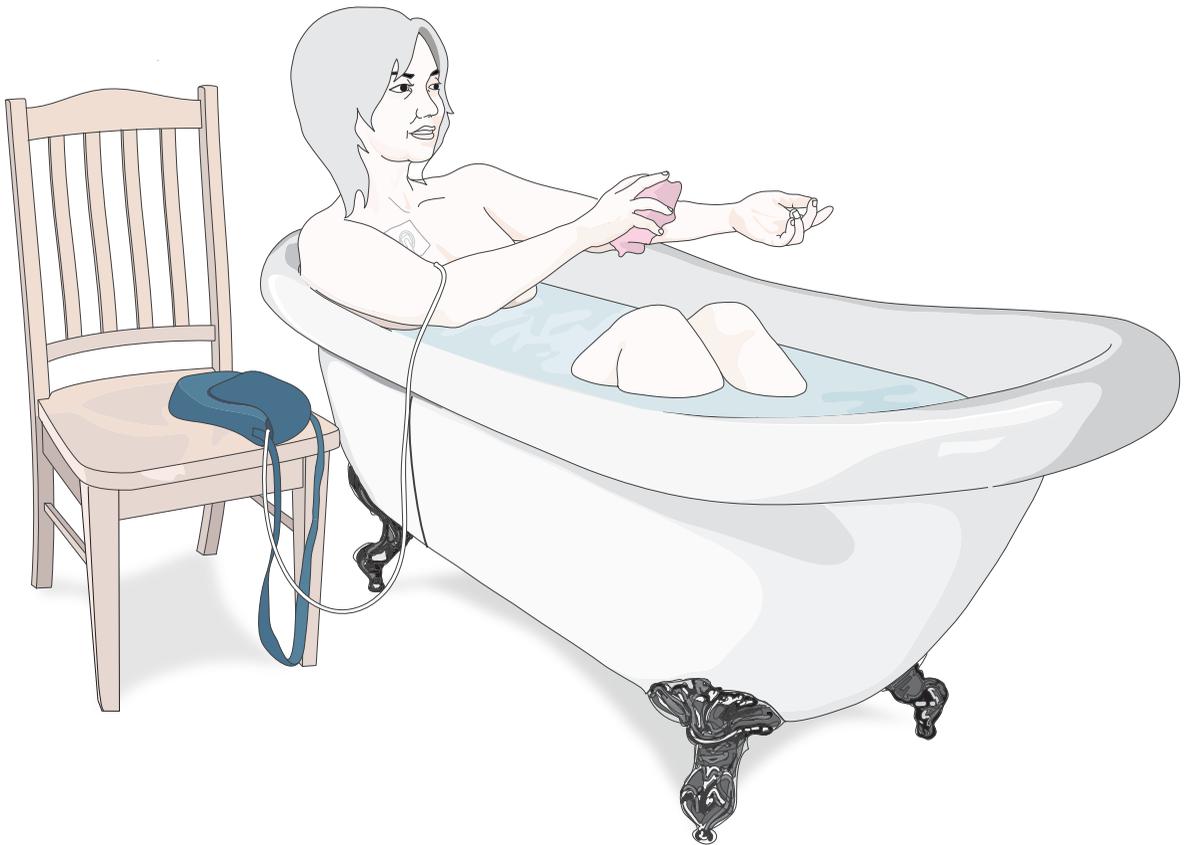
Avoid letting the infuser get too hot. For example, do not put the infuser in direct sunlight, near a warm oven, radiator, or heating blanket.

Avoid letting the infuser get too cold. For example, when outside in the winter keep it under your coat.



Be careful not to pull on the tube. Avoid rough play or sports. Use caution around young children and pets.

You may take a shower or bath. It is important to keep the bandage at the catheter site dry. You can cover it with plastic such as a ziploc bag and tape the edges. Also, do not let the tube or infuser go under the water.

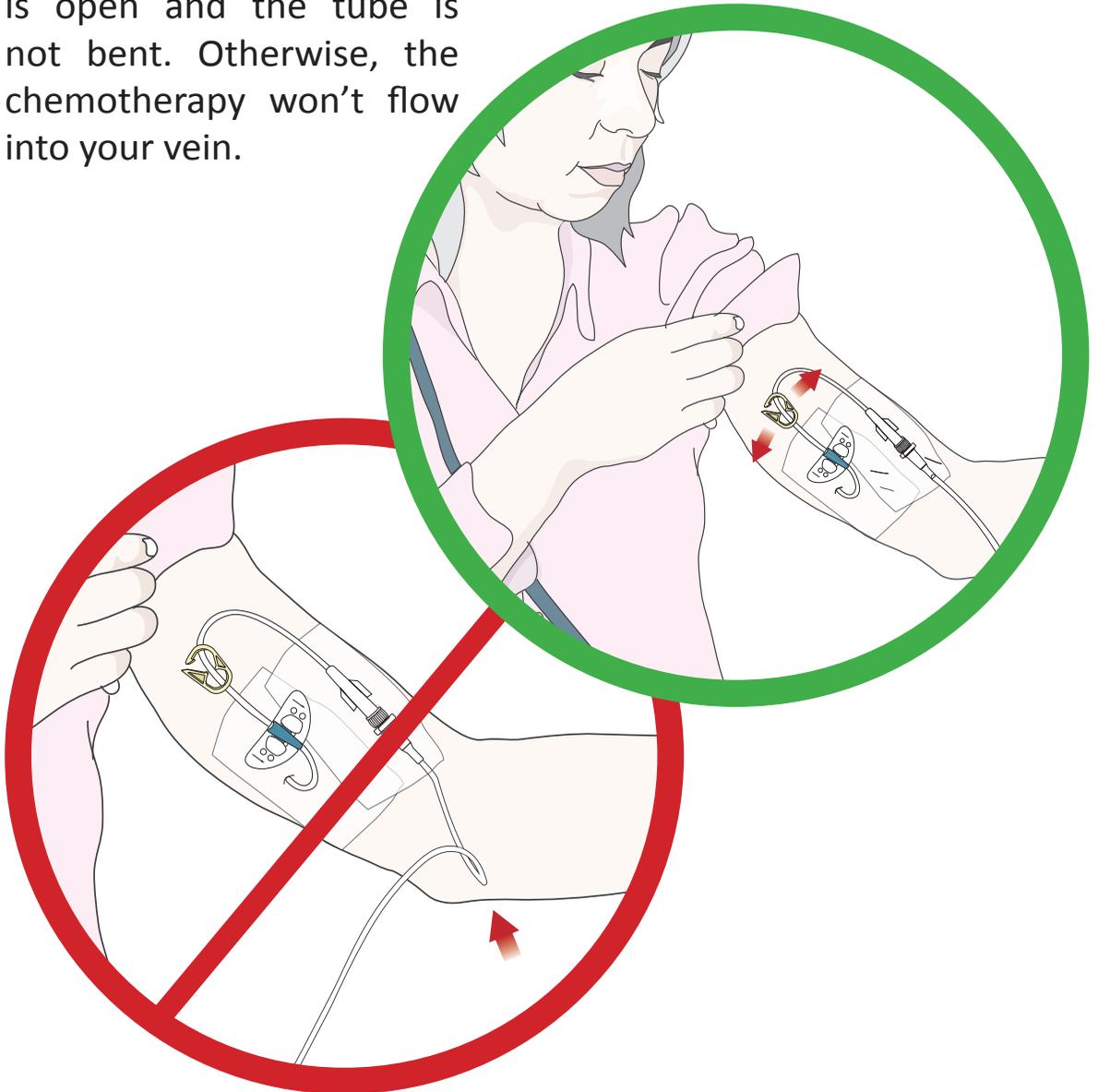


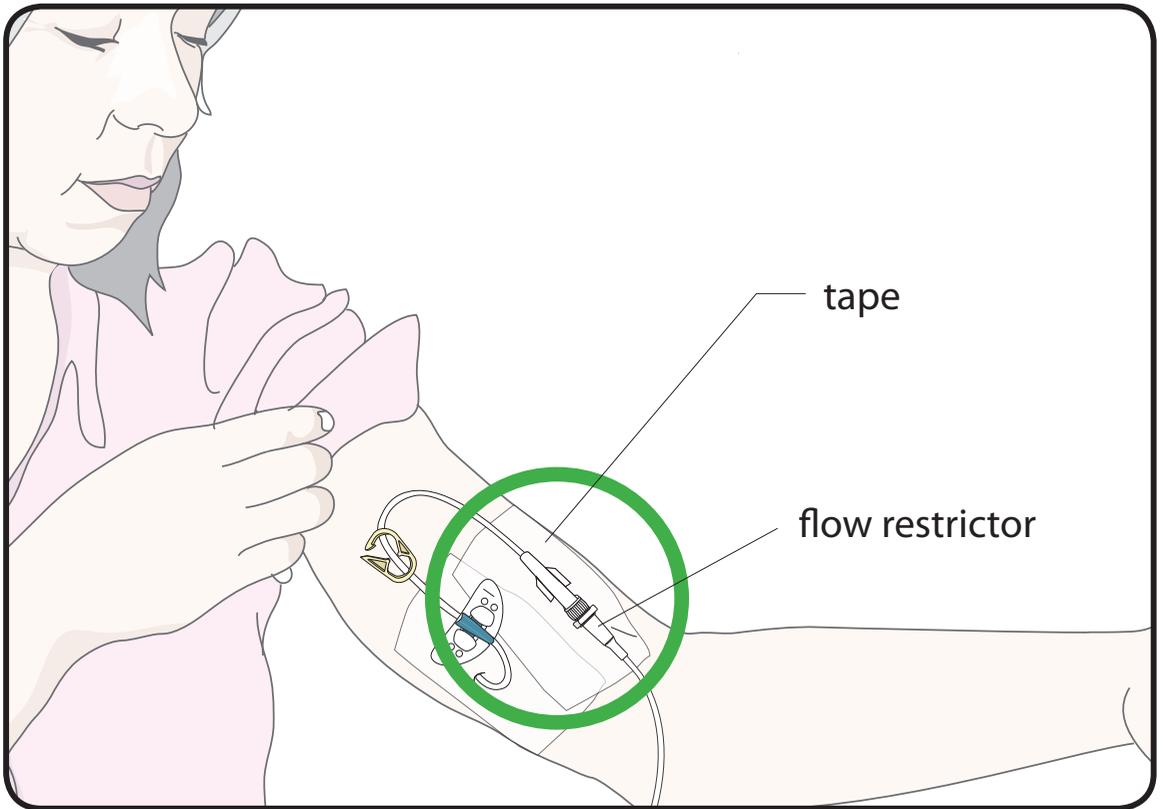
You can continue with most of your regular activities. For example, you can do light housework, go to the store or out with friends.



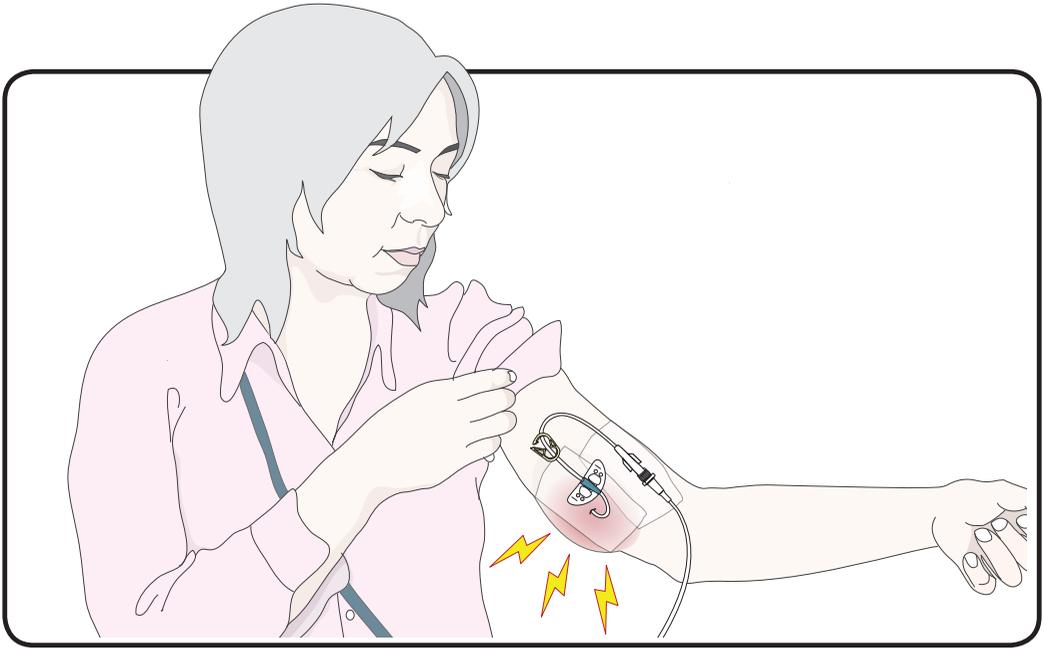
# How do I check my catheter site?

Make sure the clamp is open and the tube is not bent. Otherwise, the chemotherapy won't flow into your vein.





Make sure the flow restrictor stays taped in direct contact with your skin. This helps to make sure the infuser will flow at the right rate.



Check the catheter site two to three times a day. Check to see that the bandage is well stuck to your skin.

There should be no redness, swelling or wetness under the bandage. There should be no blood in the tube. You should not have pain at the catheter site.



**Call the Oncology Day Centre if there is:**

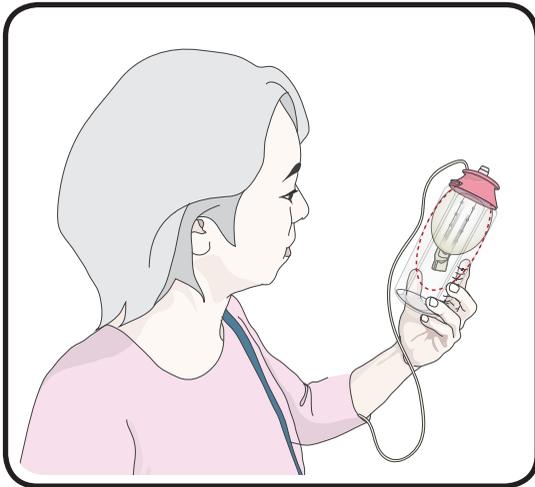
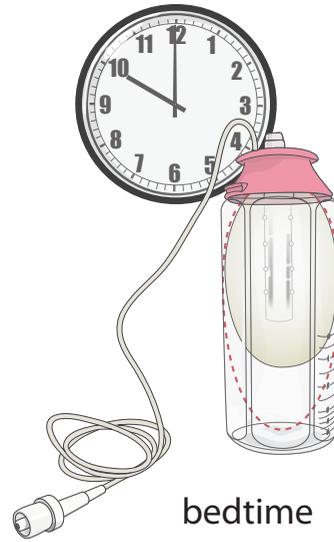
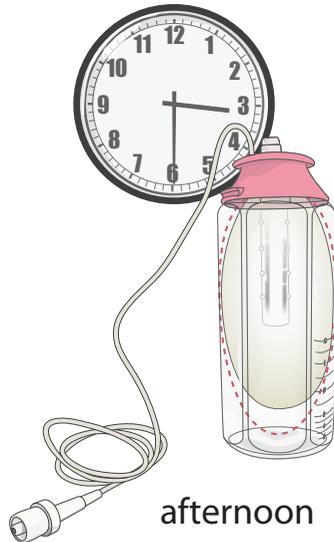
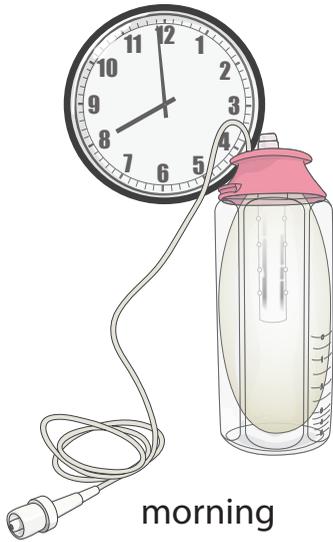
- **redness, pain or swelling at the catheter site**
- **blood in the tube**

(514) 934-1934 ext. 34160

**Call your CLSC if:**

- **your bandage is peeling off; ask for the nurse to change the bandage**

# How often do I check my infuser?



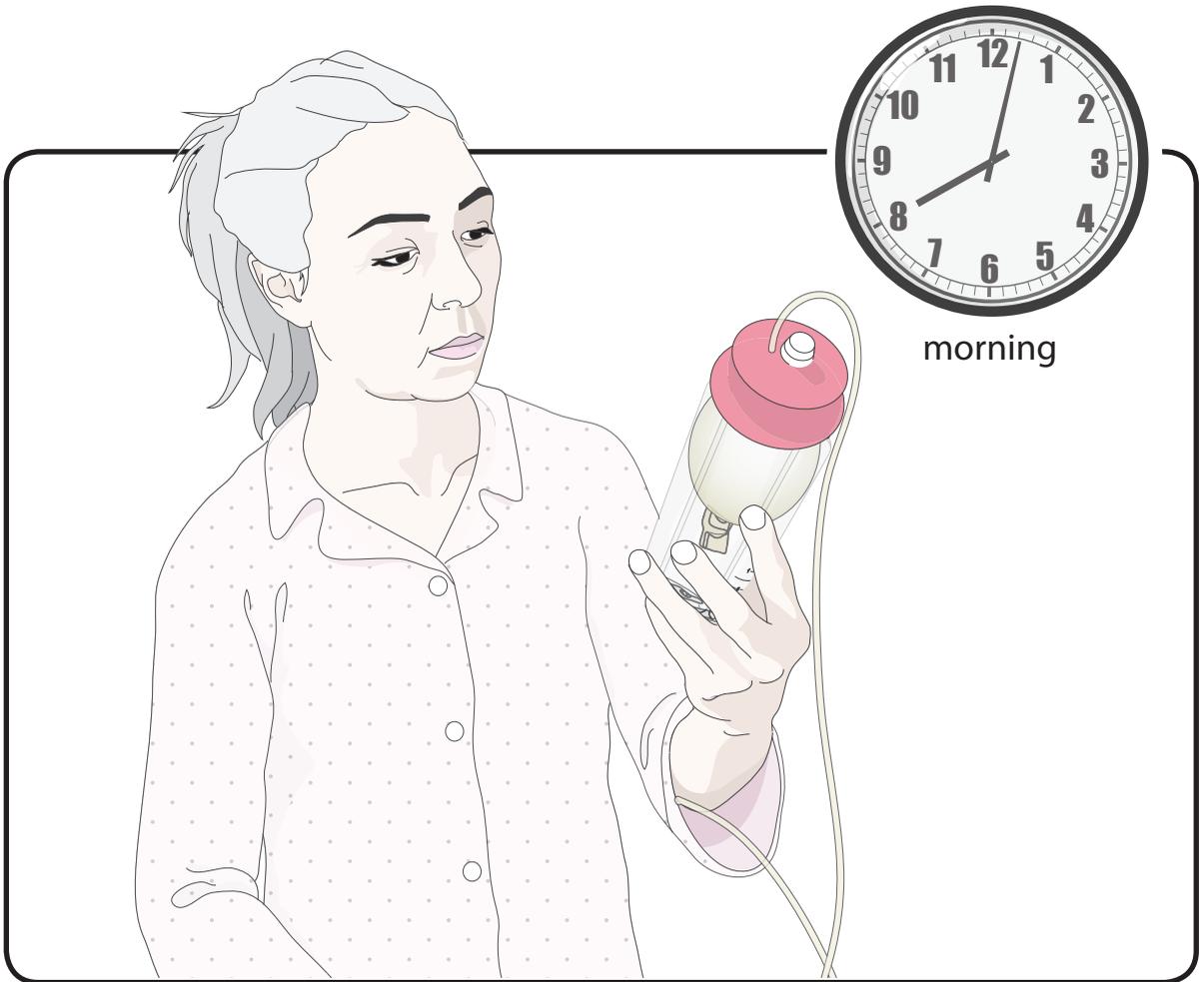
**If you have a 2 day infuser, look at the balloon 3 times a day. The balloon will get smaller slowly as the chemo flows into your vein. Check it in the morning, during the afternoon and before going to bed. If you check it more often, you may not notice any change in the size of the balloon.**



**Call the Oncology Day Centre if:**

- **your balloon is not getting smaller over 8 hours**

(514) 934-1934 ext. 34160



**If you have the infuser over more than 2 days, check the balloon just once a day in the morning. If you check it more often you may not notice any change in the size of the balloon.**

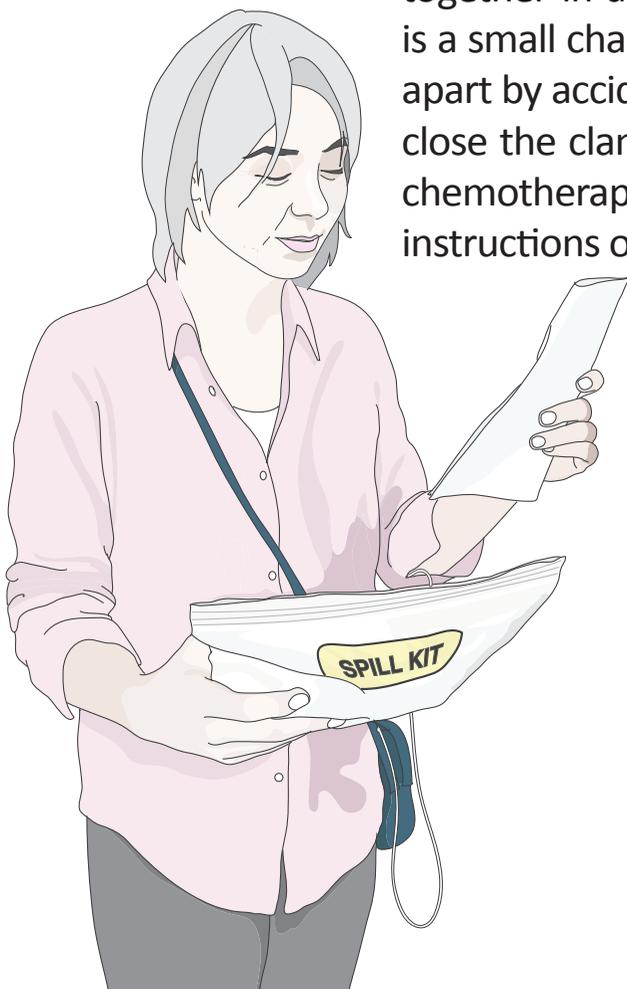


**Call the Oncology Day Centre if:**

- **your balloon is not getting smaller over 24 hours**  
(514) 934-1934 ext. 34160

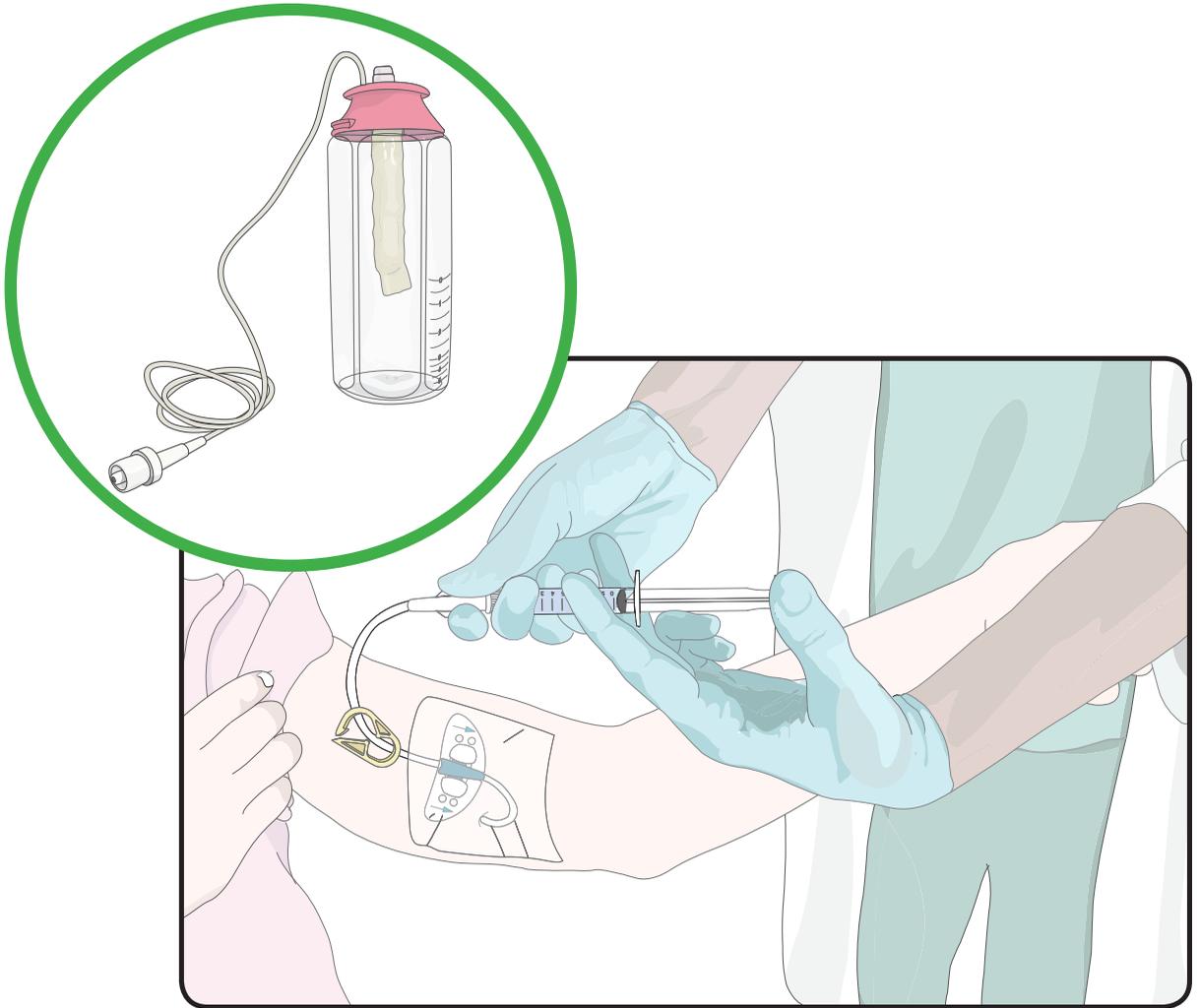
# Is it possible for my chemotherapy to leak?

The infuser and catheter are attached together in a secure way. However, there is a small chance that the tube could come apart by accident or break. If this happens, close the clamp on the catheter. Get your chemotherapy spill kit and follow the instructions on it. Then, go to the hospital.



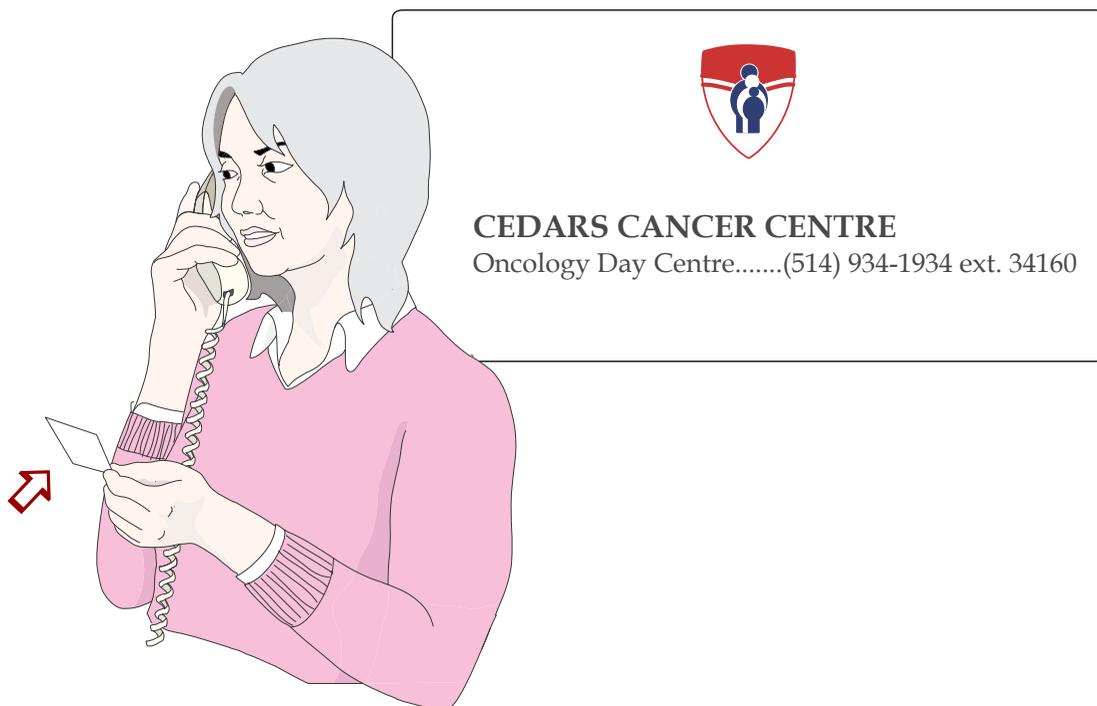
**It is recommended that you protect your mattress with a waterproof cover in case of a chemotherapy leak.**

# What happens when my chemotherapy is finished?



A CLSC nurse will remove the infuser when your chemotherapy is finished. She will also flush your catheter.

# When do I ask for help?



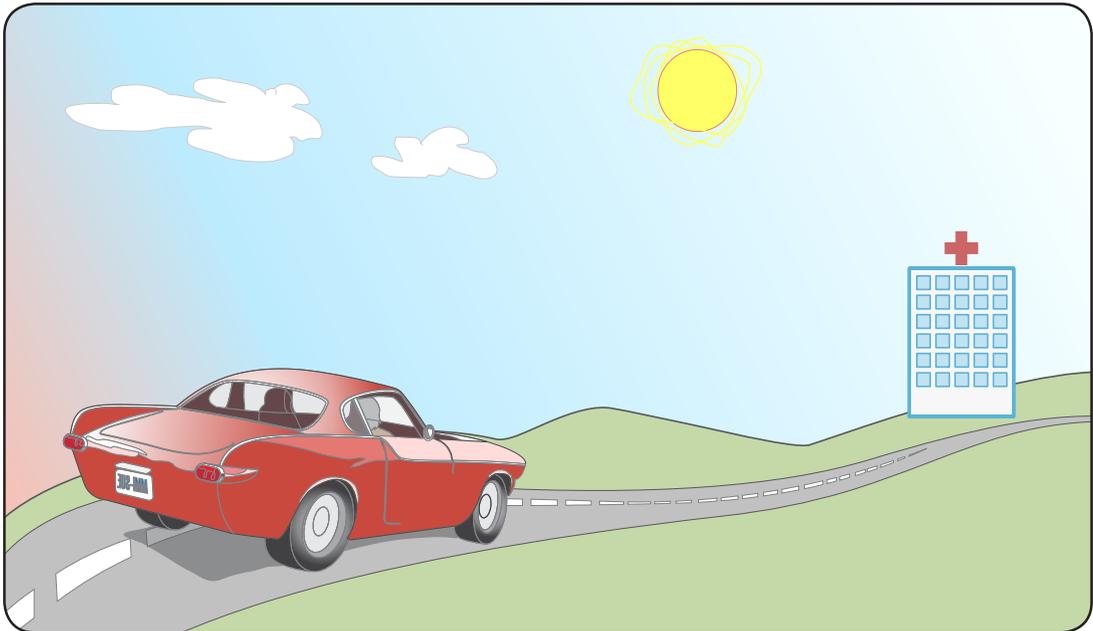
If you have any questions or concerns call us. The Oncology Day Centre is open Monday to Friday from 8AM to 4PM. At any other time, call your CLSC or Info-Santé.

### **Call the hospital if:**

- The balloon has not become smaller over 8 hours (for a 2 day infuser)
- The balloon has not become smaller over 24 hours (for a longer infuser)
- There is blood in the tube. There is redness, pain or swelling at the catheter site

### **Call your CLSC if:**

- Your bandage is peeling off. Ask for the nurse to change the dressing.



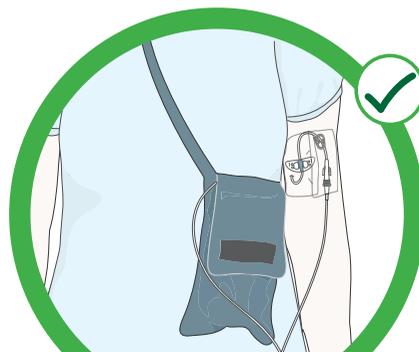
### **Come to the hospital if:**

- The tube is detached or the chemotherapy is leaking. (See the instructions in your chemotherapy spill kit).

# Do's



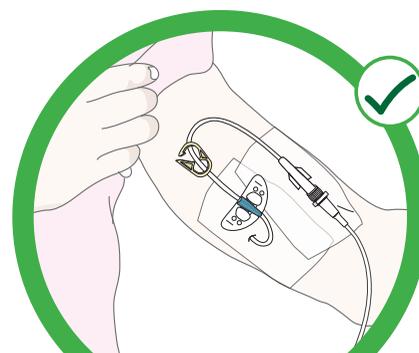
Keep your infuser in its carrying bag



Keep your infuser at the level of your catheter site



Keep your infuser at room temperature



Check your catheter site and tube several times a day



Check the balloon in the infuser to see if it is decreasing in size



Call if you have any questions or concerns.

# Don'ts



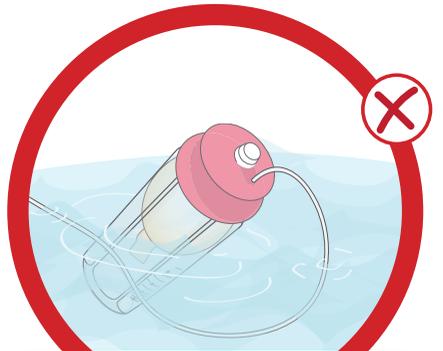
Expose your infuser to light



Do any activities which may cause pulling of the tube



Get your catheter dressing wet



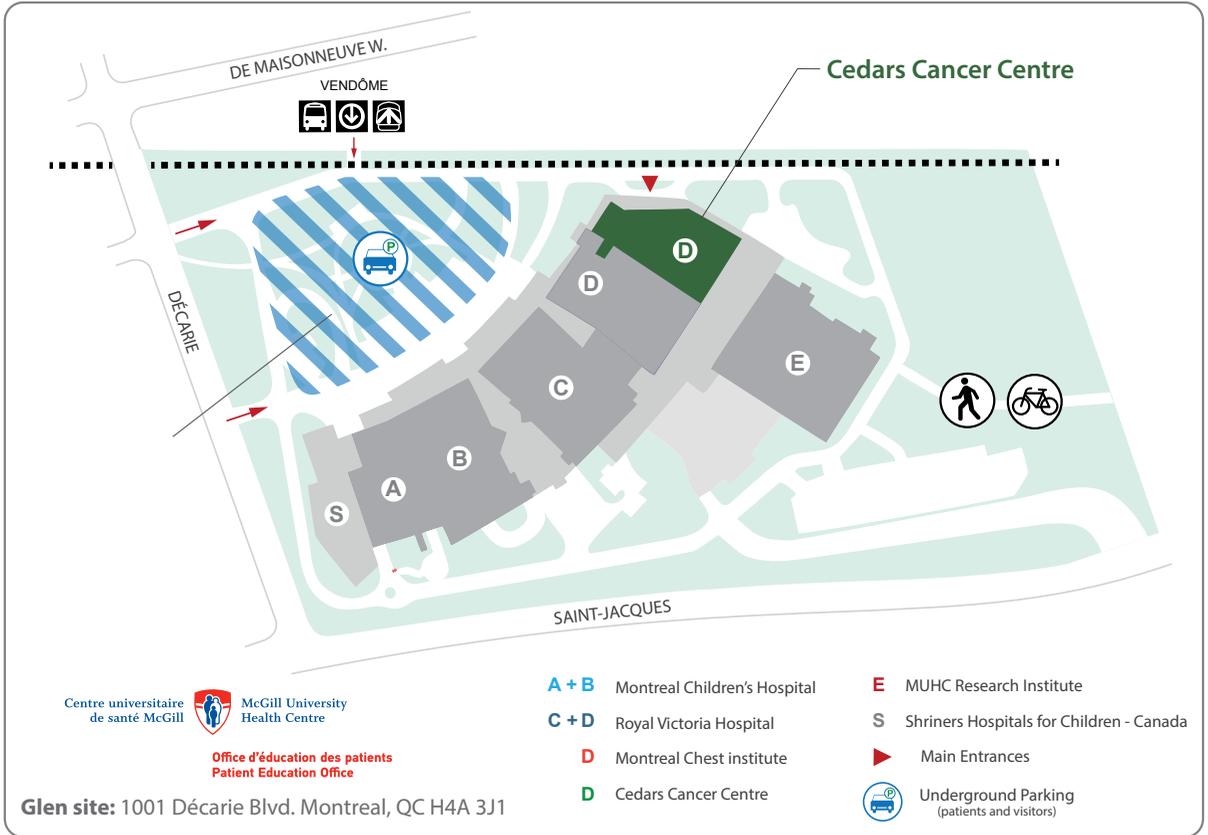
Let the tube or infuser go under water.







# Hospital Map



Looking for  
information on

# Cancer?



Search: Cedar Cancer Guides  
Chemotherapy  
Radiotherapy  
Pain control  
Cancer and fertility



Visit the Patient Education Collection  
[muhpatienteducation.ca](http://muhpatienteducation.ca)



Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



McGill University  
Health Centre

Office d'éducation des patients  
Patient Education Office