

IV Infiltration

Definition:

IV infiltration occurs when some of the medication and intravenous fluid leaks out from the vein into the surrounding tissue. Risk factors for this to occur would include small and fragile veins, difficult venous access, prior therapy with irritating drugs, prolonged infusion, bolus infusion, high pressure flow, and placement of IV with minimal underlying tissue.

Symptoms include the sensation of burning, tingling, and pain at the insertion site. IV site can also appear swollen and red.

How to care for site at home:

1. Raise arm above heart level (can use a pillow) to help reduce swelling
2. Apply cold compress on the site intermittently for 20 minutes for 2-3 times per day. Place a thin towel between compress and your skin to avoid further irritation of site.
3. Keep the site dry and clean.
4. A clean bandage can be used to cover site but must be changed if dirty or wet.
5. Avoid use of lotions, soap, or other topical products on the site.
6. Continue to assess the IV site daily to monitor for improvement.

Please contact your physician for the following:

1. Increase in swelling, redness, pain, numbness to site
2. Drainage such as fluid, blood, or pus continues to leak from site
3. Blisters or bruises occurs at the IV site
4. Fever occurs above 100.4 F
5. Surrounding skin at IV site turns dark and peels

References:

Bauer, C. (2022) Oncology-Related Skin and Wound Care. In L.L. McNichol, C.R. Ratcliff, S.S. Yates (Eds., 2nd ed.). WOCN® Core Curriculum: Wound Management. Philadelphia, PA. Wolters Kluwer. Pg. 674.

DeMuro, J., Watson, L.R. (2020, June 1) *Discharge Instructions for IV Infiltration*. UC San Diego Health. <https://myhealth.ucsd.edu/library/HealthSheets/3,S,61011>