



# Extravasation

## What is extravasation?

Extravasation happens when intravenous drugs (anti-cancer treatment/chemotherapy) leak into the skin or surrounding tissues, from the vein or device into which they were being given. This may cause pain, stinging, swelling, redness or other changes to your skin.

Even though all possible precautions are taken to try and reduce the risk of an extravasation happening, it is a known complication of intravenous anti-cancer treatment that is often difficult to prevent. The important thing is that it has been detected and will be treated.



## What are the possible complications of extravasation and what treatment is given?

The treatment and potential complications depend on which drug has extravasated (leaked). Most patients experience few problems following extravasation. However, if left untreated, some drugs may cause irritation to your skin and result in pain or the development of blisters or ulcers. In rare cases deeper tissue injury can develop.

In your case, the name of the drug that leaked into the skin is: \_\_\_\_\_

The treatment protocol recommended by East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust for this type of drug extravasation is ticked below:

The application of a <b>cold pack</b> and observe	<input type="checkbox"/>
The application of a <b>heat pad</b> and observe	<input type="checkbox"/>
The application of a <b>cold pad</b> and refer for the affected area to be 'washed out' with saline	<input type="checkbox"/>
The application of a <b>heat pad</b> and refer for the affected area to be 'washed out' with saline	<input type="checkbox"/>

Although this treatment will help to minimise the chance of developing further problems, you should check the area every day and contact the **acute oncology service on: 07825 028855** if you have any of the following symptoms at, or near, the site of the extravasation:

- Redness or swelling after the first 48 hours
- Pain
- Blistering
- Ulceration
- Change in skin colour

## What else do I need to do?

- Gently exercise the affected hand or arm
- Take mild painkillers (eg, paracetamol) if required
- Check with the nurse or doctor when they would like you to come back for review of the extravasation site

