

Removal of central lines

Central lines are generally removed three to four months after completing chemotherapy. They are routinely removed at Southampton Children's Hospital on John Atwell day ward (opposite Piam Brown ward). Occasionally it may be possible for your child's central line to be removed at your local shared care centre.

When your child is ready for removal of their line, they are included on a waiting list and they will be called into hospital when a space becomes available.

Your child will receive a general anaesthetic in theatre when the central line is removed. The procedure usually takes 15 to 30 minutes. However your child may be off the ward for one to two hours.

A small incision is made in the skin above the place where the central line comes out. A small piece of harmless synthetic material known as the cuff is sometimes left behind. This usually causes no problems but may be felt as a small lump of about 1cm in diameter. However, if it becomes a problem please mention it to your doctor on one of your follow up visits.

It is usually possible for your child to go home the same day the line is removed. Your child may be a bit sore for a day or so, but this will soon pass. Paracetamol (Disprol/Calpol) usually relieves any discomfort.

The small hole at the exit site of the central line quickly heals over and a scab will form. If there is a dressing, you should remove this after 24 hours. If the site oozes, renew the dressing as necessary.

Once a scab has formed it is safe to have a bath, shower or go swimming. This usually takes two to three days.

As always, if your child is unwell after the anaesthetic or you are worried about the line site, please contact the ward as soon as possible.

Your child is not allowed to keep the central line after it has been removed. It will be disposed of in theatre.

Guidelines for morning operations

Please bring your child to the ward for 8am before the theatre list starts to allow time to sign the consent form, for any blood tests and examination by the anaesthetist and surgeon.

Morning fasting instructions:

Children under one year of age (and older breast fed toddlers)

1. Children who have formula feeds and solid food should fast from 2.30am.
2. Children who are breast fed only should fast from 4.30am.

Children over one year of age

1. Children who have an early supper may have a bedtime snack but should not eat after 12 midnight.
2. An early morning drink of water or diluted squash is allowed up until 6.30am. This does **NOT** include milk, fresh fruit juice or fizzy drinks.

Guidelines for afternoon operations

Please bring your child to the ward for 12 noon before the theatre list starts to allow time to sign the consent form, for any blood tests and examination by the anaesthetist and surgeon.

Afternoon fasting instructions:

Children under one year of age

1. Children who have formula feeds and solid food should fast from 7.00am.
2. Children who are breast fed only should fast from 9.00am.

Children over one year of age

1. Children may eat a light breakfast but must fast from 7.00am.
2. Children may drink water or diluted squash up until 11.00am. This does **NOT** include milk, fresh fruit juice or fizzy drinks.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

If any food or drinks are given to your child after these times, it is likely that their operation will be cancelled or at best delayed several hours.

If in doubt, or for any further information and help telephone Piam Brown day ward on 023 8120 4249 or Piam Brown ward on 023 8120 4816/4817.