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Further Information

For more information see the Bliss Baby Charity website at:

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Information for Parents

Long Line Insertion

Neonatal Unit

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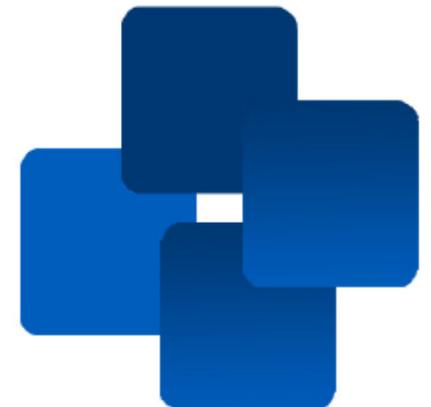
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What is a 'long line'?

A long line is a long and very thin silicone catheter that is placed in one of your baby's veins for nutrition. It is long because we will put it into a small vein and then thread the line through until the tip lies in one of the large veins nearer to the heart.

Why does my baby need a long line?

Long lines are often used in preterm babies and in other babies who have problems with digesting milk.

A long line is used for giving food (parenteral nutrition), strong solutions and sometimes drugs directly into your baby's bloodstream. These are strong solutions that might cause damage to your baby's skin if given through an ordinary drip into a small vein.

Where will the line be put in?

The line is usually put in a vein in your baby's arm or leg. Sometimes when it is difficult to find a suitable vein here we may need to use one of the veins on your baby's scalp.

What are the risks associated with a long line?

Possible complications include:

- Infection
- Blockage of the line
- Problems relating to the long line ending up in the wrong position
- Leakage of the intravenous fluid outside the vein, for example, into the abdomen or chest, etc.

Long lines are put in on the neonatal unit using sterile gloves, gowns and skin antiseptic solution, just like in an operating theatre. Even so, long lines can sometimes become infected. If there are concerns about infection, we may take the line out and start antibiotics. The line may also be removed or repositioned if any of the other complications occur or if it goes into the wrong place.

What happens after the line is put in?

When the line has been placed, the doctor will request an x-ray for your baby to check that the line is in a good position. Only when the doctors are sure that the line is in a good position will it be used.

Will it hurt my baby to have this line inserted?

There will be some brief discomfort while the line is inserted because a needle is used. The doctor will assess whether your baby needs pain relief before starting the procedure and the nurse looking after your baby will ensure that he/she is supported for the procedure.

How long will the line stay in?

The long line is needed until your baby can take the full amount of milk needed for growth. The line may be needed for many days and sometimes weeks. Once it is no longer required the line will be removed.

Are there any complications when the line is removed?

Removal rarely causes any complications, though there may be a small amount of bleeding which is easily controlled by applying pressure to the site for a short while.

Are there any alternatives?

Long lines are the recognised standard for delivering nutrition.

Consent

The procedure does not require you to give written consent as it is considered part of the normal pathway of care for your baby.

More questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the doctors or nursing staff.