
What is an ethanol lock?

An ethanol lock is a form of alcohol used to disinfect or deep clean your child's central line. It is medicine for your child's line, not for your child.

- Do not push the ethanol into your child's body. It must stay in the line for it to work well.
- ALWAYS remove ethanol from the line after the amount of time prescribed by your child's doctor.

Why does my child need ethanol locks?

Ethanol locks are most often prescribed when someone has already had a central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) and to help prevent future CLABSIs. Talk with the doctor or nurse to learn more about why your child needs ethanol locks.

It is still very important to use proper hygiene and to closely follow central line home care instructions. Ethanol locks should not replace that.

Ethanol locks should not be used for central venous access devices (CVAD) that contain polyurethane. Talk with the doctor or nurse if you are unsure about what type of line your child has.

How do I use ethanol locks?

Pick a time when your child has at least a 2 to 4 hour break from any infusions (such as fluids or I.V. nutrition) and any I.V. medicines.

Part 1

1. Gather supplies.
2. Remove jewelry, and roll up sleeves.
3. Wash your hands well with soap and water for 30 seconds. Wash between each finger and under your nails. Rinse and dry your hands well. Or, you may use alcohol-based gel or foam if you do not see dirt on them.
4. Put on clean gloves.

Part 2

5. Scrub the injection cap on the line for 15 seconds with cleaning wipe using friction.
6. Allow the injection cap to dry for 15 seconds. Do not touch, wipe, fan or blow on the injection cap to help it dry.
7. Remove the top of a saline syringe, and remove any air bubbles from the syringe.
8. Attach it to the clean injection cap.
9. Open the clamp, and slowly push at least 5 mL (milliliters) of saline into the line.
10. Pull back on the syringe until you see blood in it. Then, clamp the line, remove the syringe, and discard the syringe with blood in a sharps container. If you cannot pull back blood in the syringe:
 - **Do not** give the ethanol lock.
 - Stop what you are doing and call your child's doctor.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Ethanol locks, continued

11. Scrub the injection cap on the line again for 15 seconds, and allow it to dry for 15 seconds.
12. Connect a new saline syringe, open the clamp again, and push at least 5 mL of saline into the line to make sure there is no blood in the line. Clamp the line, and remove the syringe.
13. Scrub the injection cap on the line again for 15 seconds, and allow it to dry for 15 seconds.
14. Connect the ethanol syringe, and push only the prescribed amount of ethanol into the line. Clamp the line, and remove the syringe.
15. Label the central line with a “Do Not Flush” sticker. This lets everyone know there is ethanol in the line so they will not flush the ethanol into your child’s body.
16. Allow the ethanol to stay in the line for the prescribed amount of time. (This is most often 2 to 4 hours.)

Part 3

17. After the prescribed amount of time is finished, repeat steps 1 thru 4.
18. Scrub the injection cap on the line for 15 seconds, and allow it to dry for 15 seconds.
19. Connect an empty syringe, open the clamp, and pull back 2 mL of fluid. This 2 mL will be a mixture of ethanol and blood.
20. Clamp the line, remove the syringe, and discard the syringe with blood and ethanol in a sharps container.
21. Scrub the injection cap on the line again for 15 seconds, and allow it to dry for 15 seconds.
22. Connect a new saline syringe, open the clamp again, and push 5 mL of saline into the line. Clamp the line, and remove the syringe.
23. You can now start your child’s infusion or use heparin to keep the line from clotting until the start of their next infusion.

If your child has 2 or 3 lumens on their catheter, you will need 1 dose of ethanol for each lumen. Do steps 1 thru 22 for each lumen.

NOTE: Ethanol and heparin should not be used together. You must flush with saline between each medicine.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor **right away** if:

- You are not able to draw back blood from your child’s line before putting in the ethanol.
- You are not able to pull back ethanol from your child’s line.
- You are not able to flush your child’s central line at any time.

There may be times when a doctor or nurse tells you to flush the ethanol through the central line. **If this happens, watch your child closely for dizziness, nausea and light-headedness.**

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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