

## Arterial Line Placement

An arterial or “art-line” is a thin, hollow tube (catheter) placed in an artery in the wrist, arm, or groin. An artery is a blood vessel where you can feel your pulse.

### An art-line is used to:

- **Constantly monitor blood pressure:** The art-line is attached to a monitor, which displays a waveform and numbers. This tells the health care team what your blood pressure is at all times.
- **Draw blood samples:** The art-line may be placed to obtain frequent blood tests. It may be used to monitor the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood and can show how well you are breathing. Other blood samples can also be drawn off the art-line which will decrease the number of times you will need to be stuck with a needle.

### Risks

Some of the risks include:

- **Pain** – You may feel a poke as the doctor inserts the needle. We use local numbing medicine to limit pain when the art-line is placed. The pain gets better once the needle is in and the catheter is in place.

- **Infection** – Any tube entering the body can make it easier for bacteria from the skin to get into the bloodstream. We are careful when cleaning the skin and putting on the dressing to decrease the risk of infection.

### Common Questions

#### How long will the catheter stay in?

This varies. The artline will stay in as long as it is needed.

#### Can I move around with catheter in?

Yes, but be careful. The art-line is often sutured in but could, like any other line, be tugged on and pulled out by accident. Please ask for help when getting out of bed.

#### Can the art-line catheter be used to give medicine like an IV?

No. The art-line will connect to fluid which drips in very slowly to prevent the line from clotting. We cannot give medicine in an art-line because it is not good for the artery and it could cause tissue damage.