

## 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 helps the health care team monitor your blood pressure at all times.
- **Draw blood samples:** The art-line may be placed to take frequent blood tests. One blood test we may take helps us to monitor the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood and can show how well you are breathing. This test is called an arterial blood gas. 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** –We use local numbing medicine to limit pain when the art-line is placed. You may still feel a poke as the doctor inserts the needle. After placement, the needle is removed and only a catheter is left in place.

- **Infection** – Any tube that enters the body can make it easier for bacteria from the skin to get into the bloodstream. We follow a strict sterile procedure when inserting the art-line to decrease the risk of infection. The nurse will also monitor for signs of infection such as redness, tenderness or swelling.

## Common Questions

### How long will the catheter stay in?

This varies. It 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 be tugged on and pulled out by accident. Please ask for help when getting out of bed.

### Can the 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.