

HAGYARD CARE

Equine Medical Institute

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Associates, PLLC

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CATHETER CARE & PATENCY

HOW TO USE THE CATHETER

*In order to keep the catheter patent, heparinized saline is used **before and after all medications**. Typically 5 to 10cc of heparinized saline is used each time.*

- 1) Have someone hold the horse for you.
- 2) Release the clamp on the catheter (not all catheters have a clamp).
- 3) With a relatively full syringe of heparinized saline (flush), hold the injection cap with one hand and insert the needle (which is attached to the heparin labeled syringe) into the rubber port with the other hand. You will see the needle slide through the port.
- 4) Test the patency of the catheter by flushing 5 to 10cc hep-saline through right away. The fluid should always move easily into the catheter and without resistance. If you notice any swelling occurring around the catheter, stop and call your farm veterinarian.
- 5) When finished, place the cap back on the needle of the syringe.

Now you're ready to flush the medication through.

- 6) Pick up your syringe with medication.
- 7) Insert the needle into the rubber port and gently push the medication in.
- 8) Recap the needle.
- 9) Now you **must** flush the catheter again with the hep-saline. As above, insert the needle into the port and simply flush through 5 to 10cc of fluid.
- 10) Recap the needle.
- 11) Close the clamp on the catheter (unless more medications are to be administered at this time).
- 12) If more medications are to be given, repeat the above procedures (6 and 10 and ending with 11).

It is important to **always flush between medications** to prevent them from mixing together and causing a reaction with each other.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

You should always start and finish with the flush (heparinized saline). This fluid sits in the catheter and prevents the horse's blood from clotting at the tip and clogging the catheter. It also prevents the medication from sitting in the catheter and hardening or crystallizing. You should always pay close attention to the catheter. If any unusual swelling occurs at the site of entry or the catheter looks like it is shifting (or the horse has rubbed it), please call your farm veterinarian.

Do not lay the needle down on a shelf or in the straw with the cap off, always cap the needle immediately after using. If the needle should fall onto the ground it should be replaced with a new one before using. Please try to be careful not to let the needle touch anything other than the rubber port when it's uncapped.

And finally, remember the catheter goes directly into the vein, so try to keep the injection port clean. If you notice dirt and debris accumulating around this area, then the port needs to be changed before using (an alcohol swab can be used to clean **minor** dust/dirt). Always wash your hands prior to handling the catheter.

