

HOME INTRAVENOUS THERAPY AND CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Advice for patients, parents and carers

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*This leaflet has been written to assist you and your medical advisers.
It is not intended to replace any advice you may receive from your doctor.*

Regular courses of intravenous (IV) antibiotics at home can nowadays be a routine feature in the treatment of CF, although for many treatment in hospital remains preferable.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods. Neither can be seen as an easy option but each offers a degree of choice and flexibility. Patients also have individual needs, which may change from course to course. Deciding the best place to receive IV antibiotic treatment is influenced by the patient's condition, availability of family and professional support, geographical location and personal needs and preferences. This can all be discussed with your CF nurse or doctor.

IV courses can be given in the following ways:

- at home
- started in hospital and completed at home
- in hospital

The antibiotics can be delivered to the veins via 'short' cannulae, midline catheters or 'Ports' as appropriate.

Learning how to do home IV therapy

Teaching the patient or carer how to draw up drugs, safely administer IV antibiotics and care for venous access is carried out by suitably qualified and experienced nurses or doctors, with a named person responsible for assessing progress.

Many patients will have had IV courses before and already be familiar with the procedure.

Teaching programmes are tailored for individuals at their own pace. It is essential that the patient or carer is both competent and confident before home IV therapy is considered.

Reassessment may be necessary, particularly if IV courses are infrequent.

Practical considerations

You will need a cool, clean, dry shelf or cupboard out of reach of children and pets to store your drugs and equipment. Some drugs may need to be stored in a fridge – your pharmacist will advise you of this. Simple, user-friendly instructions should be issued to back up your teaching programme by your nurse or doctor. This should contain a section on dealing with problems. Arrangements will be made for enough equipment to be issued to complete the course. A 'sharps bin' is required for safe disposal of needles, syringes and other sharp items and this must be sealed on completion.

Information on disposal and/or collections of the box and any other items of equipment will be given by your nurse or doctor.

Monitoring and follow-up of home IV courses may involve home visits, phone calls or clinic appointments. Some drugs require a blood test to check dosage is correct; again, you will be advised of this. You will need to be available for any follow-up care necessary to ensure treatment is both safe and effective.

Reactions to drugs can occur, which is why the first one or two doses of any new drug are given in hospital under medical supervision.

However, should you experience any of the following problems you should stop the course and seek immediate advice from the 24-hour contact number provided by the hospital initiating the IV therapy:

- rashes
- nausea
- severe diarrhoea
- any other unusual symptoms
- temperature
- vomiting
- swellings

Severe reactions are **very rare** but must be treated as an emergency by calling an ambulance and going to the emergency department. This will include:

- sudden collapse or illness
- severe difficulty breathing
- swelling around the neck

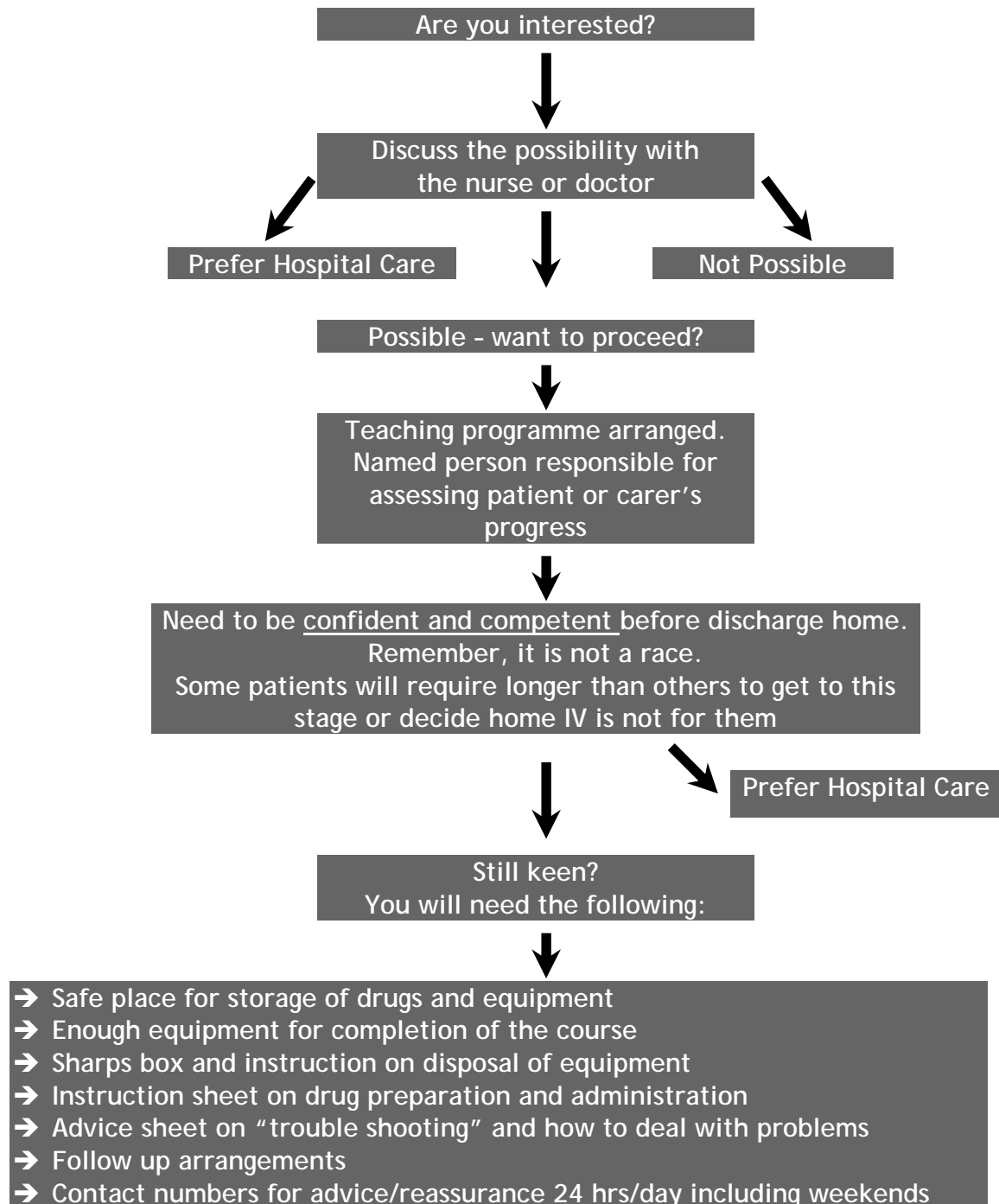
Your CF Centre will let you know whether you need to have special training and / or emergency medication (anaphylaxis kit) to deal with a severe allergic reaction.

It may be possible to continue with employment or education whilst having a course of IV antibiotics and this can be discussed with the nurse or doctor initiating the course of therapy. However physiotherapy, good nutrition and adequate rest are all essential towards achieving the best outcome from an IV antibiotic course.

Similarly, drug times may be adjusted to accommodate these activities. In some cases drug administration is possible at work or school. It is advisable to inform your employer or school that an IV line is in place and an antibiotic course in progress as their permission may be required for health and safety reasons. In every case, good communication between all those involved is essential.

Remember, giving IVs at home is an option. Hospital care is still available if you need or prefer it.

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL HOME IV COURSES



Further information

If you have any questions that have not been answered in this booklet, you can contact the Cystic Fibrosis Trust Support Service: ☎ **0845 859 1000**

For further general information and literature published by the Cystic Fibrosis Trust please contact:

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