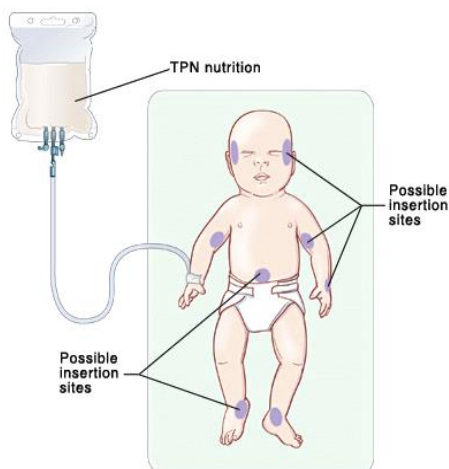


### What is a longline?

A longline is another name for a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. They are called longlines, because unlike an IV, the catheter is longer and is threaded all the way to the major blood vessel, which sits just outside the heart.



Common longline insertion sites

©Mountnittany.org

Longlines are usually inserted into the leg or arm, however, sometimes if there is no other access, the longline may need to be inserted into the scalp. The doctor or nurse practitioner will ask your permission before inserting a longline into the scalp.

The longline is inserted under sterile conditions (to help prevent infection) in NICU by a doctor or nurse practitioner. Once inserted, an x-ray confirms placement of the longline before it is used. The longline placement can be adjusted if required. The longline is then securely taped in position to prevent it becoming dislodged. If there are no infection or mechanical concerns, longlines can remain in position for weeks or even months. When changing the medications and lines, nurses will use a sterile technique to

keep the longline as clean as possible, and to reduce the risk of infection.



Longline taping © Libby Foster

### Why does a baby need a longline?

Babies in NICU commonly need longlines for a variety of reasons.

- Baby has been born prematurely.
- For nutrition and weight gain, Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) is delivered via the longline. TPN is a sterile solution containing nutrients normally found in oral feeds - protein, carbohydrate, water, vitamins, minerals and electrolytes. The lipids, which run separately, provide fat and vitamins. As your baby begins to tolerate increasing volumes of oral feeds, the rate of the TPN can be gradually reduced until the baby no longer needs it, and the longline can be removed.
- If a baby needs surgery, which means that he/she cannot have oral feeds for longer than a few days, then a longline, is the best way to provide the nutrition needed.
- Longlines can also be used to administer medications.

*(continued overleaf)*

[continued]

## **Can I still cuddle my baby?**

You can still be involved with your baby's cares, and give him/her cuddles. The most important thing is to always keep the line clean and free of germs. Take care to keep the line, connection points and tape from contamination with urine or faeces from baby's dirty nappies.

## **Potential complications**

Complications are rare but your baby will be watched closely. If you notice any swelling and redness of the groin, abdomen, shoulder or chest, as you are caring for your baby, please inform a nurse.