

What is a vascular access port?

Vascular access ports (VAPs) are medical implant devices occasionally recommended for patients that are undergoing long-term medical treatment or that require frequent blood tests for monitoring of chronic conditions.

Routinely used in human medicine, a VAP is implanted under the skin during a brief, outpatient surgical procedure through a small incision. The main advantage of port placement is that it provides your veterinarian access to administer intravenous medications or draw blood without the need for repeated and potentially painful puncture of the veins. The port is a sterile, semi-permanent device created from biocompatible materials, and includes a catheter placed into a vein (often the jugular or femoral vein), connected to a metal hub with a silicone membrane that is designed for repeated puncture by a specific (Huber-type) needle (see image below).

What are the indications for port placement?

- Chemotherapy
- Sedation for radiation treatments
- Long-term medication administration
- IV fluid therapy
- Anti-seizure medications •
- Monitoring blood values
- Blood donor access



What is the post-operative care?

Incisional healing typically takes place within one to two weeks after the procedure. A small bump may be felt under the skin at the location of the port, but no portion of the device will be exposed. The most frequent complications associated with the procedure are minor and include obstruction of the catheter or migration of the port over time, which may require adjustment or replacement.