



# **IV Therapy:**

*A Different Way of Getting Medicine*

## **Rehearsal Guide...**

*Preparing men and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to successfully complete IV therapy*

## INTRODUCTION FOR CAREGIVERS

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self advocates to improve their health outcomes.

## HOW TO USE THIS REHEARSAL GUIDE

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. It is up to the caregiver to determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and on the individual's abilities.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share experiences in regards to having this procedure done personally, but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

### **For best practices:**

- Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- Remember to offer positive reinforcement and praise throughout the procedure, especially after the individual has successfully completed the procedure.
- **On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.**

## **SUGGESTED PROPS**

Before introducing this Rehearsal Guide, caregivers may want to consider obtaining or constructing the props suggested below. When introduced with patience and care, these props will offer the individual a more realistic experience as he or she is guided through this rehearsal process. These are merely *suggested* props; they are *not required* to utilize this rehearsal guide to prepare an individual with I/DD for IV Therapy. The optimal way to utilize this guide would be to schedule an appointment with the lab or doctor's office so the individual may touch and feel the real equipment that will be used and have the opportunity to become familiar with the site and staff.

Neither this guide nor these props are intended to replace or supersede orders from a physician or agency policies in the care of the individual. If necessary, obtain permission from the individual, his or her physician, and agency supervisory administration before attempting the use of these props.

### **Materials Needed:**

- ⇒ Rubber tourniquet (ask prescribing physician/office for one or purchase at a drug store)
- ⇒ Alcohol swab (can be made with gauze and rubbing alcohol)
- ⇒ Bandage and cotton ball

Follow "*Note to Caregiver*" prompts throughout this booklet that offer suggestions on how to use each of the props suggested above.

## Introducing the Process

*(Name of individual), the doctor wants to give you medicine in a way that is not a pill or a drink.*

It is called an IV Medication.

*(Note to caregivers: Choose the option below that best describes the specific procedure for which the individual is preparing.)*

The IV Medication will:

- help you relax for a special test or a dentist appointment.
- help you feel better if you are sick.
- give you nutrients to keep you strong if you are not allowed (or able) to eat or drink anything.



*Note to caregiver: Explain the reason the individual is getting IV therapy.*

## Looking for Veins

The IV will be placed in a vein in your hand or arm. The tourniquet (rubber tubing) on your arm will make your veins easier to see.

Look for a vein in your hand or arm. Veins are blue and usually make a little bump under the skin.



**Note to caregiver:** Point out the veins in the picture of the hand. Look for veins in your hand and the individual's hand.

## Cleaning the Area

The nurse will put on gloves and clean a small part of your arm or hand with a little alcohol swab.

This might feel a little cold.



**Note to Caregiver:** If utilizing suggested props, ask the individual if you can wipe his/her hand or arm with the alcohol swab. If the individual says no, you can demonstrate on your own arm or hand how the nurse will clean the area with the swab. Explain to the individual that there may be a slight cold sensation but that it does not hurt. Encourage the individual to wipe his/her own hand or arm or do so to yours.

## Applying the Tourniquet

There is a special way to take IV medication.

IV medication is given through a catheter in your arm or hand.

A nurse will put soft rubber tubing, called a tourniquet, on your arm.

*(This is how a tourniquet might look on your arm.)*



The tubing will gently squeeze your arm. It may feel a little tight, but it will not be on your arm very long.

**Note to caregiver:** *If utilizing suggested props, allow the individual to hold the tubing so he/she can better understand how it feels. You can ask the individual if it would be okay to gently tie the rubber tubing around his/her arm, as shown in this picture. If the individual agrees, do not tie it tightly. Once placed gently on the individual's arm, ask the individual if this hurts. Explain that this tubing will not be on his/her arm for very long. If the individual does not want to try it, tie the tubing around your arm, or have the individual do so, if able. Explain to the individual that this does not hurt. It just feels tight.*

## Putting in the Catheter

The nurse will gently put a catheter into a vein in your arm or hand.

You will probably feel a pinch while the catheter is being put into your arm or hand. It will not hurt for very long.

It is important that you stay very still while the nurse is doing this.



**Note to Caregiver:** Often the nurse will say, “just a little pinch,” before the catheter insertion. It may be beneficial to suggest to the individual to rehearse the “pinch” themselves. Ask the individual to pinch their own skin at the area of insertion of the catheter. (See picture above). This may help the person understand that the feeling of the “pinch” of the catheter will not last.

## Caregiver Reassurance

The nurse does not want to hurt you.

(Name of Caregiver) will be there with you, so you will not be alone.



**Note to Caregiver:** You may want to reassure the individual that it only hurts for a short time and to stay very still when the catheter is inserted. Be patient and speak in a low, reassuring tone while assisting the individual. Remind the individual that the nurse is there to help and cares about his/her safety and well-being.

## Medicine in Your Hand or Arm



This is what your hand or arm might look like with the catheter in it.



## Connecting the IV Tubing

The nurse will connect clear tubing to the catheter.  
This is what the catheter will look like if placed in your arm.



The nurse will put a clear dressing bandage over the catheter so it will not move if your arm is bumped.



## The Medication

The tubing in your hand or arm will be connected to a plastic bag. This is called an IV bag.

There is liquid medicine in the bag. This medicine will go through the tubing and catheter and into the vein in your arm or hand.

Most of the time, you will not feel the medicine going into your arm or hand. Sometimes it might feel cold. Sometimes it might feel warm. Tell the nurse if it gets too warm.



## The IV Pole

A nurse will hang the IV bag on a pole next to your bed or chair.  
This pole is called an IV pole.



## The IV Pump

This machine is called an IV pump.



An IV pump will be connected to the tubing from your arm or hand.

The IV pump will measure the amount of medicine you are getting by counting the drops that go into the tubing.

## When You Are Done

When you have gotten the amount of IV medicine ordered by the doctor, the nurse will take off the dressing bandage and the tape.

It might hurt your skin when the nurse takes the dressing bandage and tape off your arm or hand, just like taking off a bandage.

The nurse will take the catheter out of your arm or hand.

The nurse will put a cotton ball over the place where the catheter was and cover the cotton ball with a bandage.



**YOU CAN DO IT!**

**I know you always do the best you can!**



***Note to Caregiver:*** Take time to assess how well the person understands what was presented. Ask a few brief questions, such as, “Do you know what will happen when you go for the IV therapy?” Review this guide as often as needed to ensure the person understands and is prepared when the day of the IV therapy arrives.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ◆ Nursing Topics. (n.d.). Intravenous Therapy: IV Insertion. Retrieved from <http://nursingtopics.com/intravenous-therapy-iv-insertion/>
- ◆ Shephard, C. (2016, February 7). Preparing Your Child for an IV. Fledgling Kids. Retrieved from <http://fledglingkids.com/preparing-your-child-for-an-iv/>
- ◆ WakeMed Health & Hospitals. (n.d.). Preparing Your Child for an IV. Retrieved from <https://www.wakemed.org/childrens-preparing-your-child-for-iv>

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**For additional information regarding this guide or  
any of our physical or behavioral health trainings,**

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