SWAN GANZ CATHETER

What Is a Swan Ganz Catheter?

A Swan Ganz catheter (SWAN) is a large hollow plastic tube (much like an IV catheter). It is placed in the side of the neck or the shoulder, but it can also be placed in the groin area. The catheter is quite long and is advanced through the vein to the patient's heart.

What Is It For?

A SWAN is attached to a computerized monitor. It allows doctors and nurses to gather special information about how well the patient's heart is working. This information allows the doctors to make decisions on the best way to treat the patient.

Possible Problems

Because the tip of the SWAN is in the heart, care must be taken to make sure it is not pulled by the patient. The SWAN site will be checked frequently by the nurses for infection or irritation.