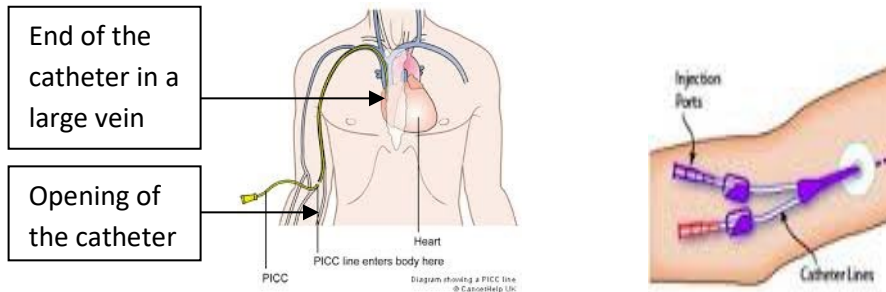


Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Teaching Sheet

Note: This information is for informational and educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment for any medical conditions.

What is a PICC?

A PICC is a long, thin, soft plastic tube placed in a large vein in your arm near or above the bend in the elbow. The tip of the tube inserts into the biggest vein in your body (superior vena cava) with tip placement just above your heart. A PICC has injection ports that are seen on your arm.



Why do you need a PICC?

A PICC is put in when you need intravenous (IV) treatment for a long time – usually for more than 6 days and will be removed when you no longer need it. It can stay in place for 6 months to 1 year (or longer) if needed. It allows for direct access to your veins and prevents the need for many needle sticks. A PICC can be used for:

- taking blood samples
- giving IV fluids
- giving IV medicines, including chemotherapy
- giving blood or blood products
- giving IV nutrition

What happens when a PICC is put in?

- Drink lots of fluids on the day of your PICC insertion to help increase the size of your veins.
- A specially trained health care provider, like a nurse, will put in your PICC. It usually takes about 1 hour. Before starting, they will explain the procedure, answer your questions, and get your consent. You will be asked to lay on a bed or stretcher. Sterile drapes and gowns will be used. An ultrasound is used to locate the vein. A small needle will be inserted into the vein and then the catheter is threaded into place. Placement of the catheter is checked by either electrocardiogram (ECG) or x-ray before it is used.

Are there any possible complications?

Your healthcare team will work to prevent any complications and if they do occur, will address them promptly. The most common problems with PICCs are:

- Bruising at the site of insertion of the PICC
- Infection
- Clot forming in the arm

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- PICC becomes blocked
- PICC coming out of proper position

How will staff care for the PICC?

- The PICC will be held in place with a special device called a StatLock to keep it secure. It is **very important** that there is no pulling on the PICC or intravenous (IV) tubing.
- The clear dressing should be changed every 7 days or if it becomes dirty, loose or wet. The dressing will be sealed around the edges and must be kept clean and dry.
- Staff will check for any signs of infection including redness, swelling and/or pus where the PICC enters the skin.
- If the PICC is not attached to an IV, it will be flushed with a solution at least once a week, to ensure it is still working.

How Do I Care For My PICC?

- Always wash your hands before you touch you line.
- You will not be able to swim or put your PICC arm in water.
- You will be given a shower sleeve to cover your arm before bathing or having a shower to make sure your PICC dressing does not get wet.
- Look at the PICC and dressing at least once per day to be sure that the bandage is clean, dry and not coming loose and that the amount of PICC visible on the skin is the same.
- Look for signs of infection such as redness, swelling, pus at the PICC exit site.
- Pain in the PICC arm may indicate infection of blood clot.

You need to see your health care provider right away if:

- If you notice signs of infection
- If the dressing becomes wet, dirty, loose or has fluid underneath it
- If your PICC arm is sore, hot, red or swollen
- If you are feeling poorly, start having difficulty breathing or have a fever

You will be given special instruction about how to do this. When in doubt go the nearest Emergency Room.

Special instructions:

If you have any questions, please ask the health care provider doing the procedure. Please take a few minutes to tell us how your procedure went by completing the short survey following QR code below.

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