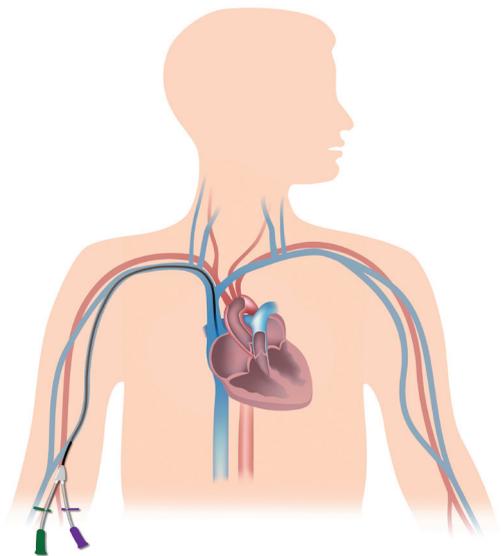


Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

Patient Information

What is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)?

PICCs are small, flexible tubes placed into a vein of your upper arm. The internal tip of the catheter ends in a large vein in your chest, most commonly the superior vena cava. Think of it like a very long cannula. PICCs are inserted to protect your small veins from the many punctures associated with ongoing intravenous treatment. They are also inserted when your therapy is too concentrated to be given by the small veins of the hands.



Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter

PICC lines are held in place with special dressings that grip the line and don't allow it to move. This is then covered by another dressing. If possible, blood pressure monitoring and venous blood sampling should be avoided near the PICC line. You should not do any **heavy lifting** whilst you have a PICC in.

If the PICC has been inserted outside of the Xray department (radiology), such as on the ward, you may need to have a chest Xray to confirm it is in the correct position.

Care of your PICC

Any person touching your PICC should clean their hands well and use gloves. This is to minimise infection. The nurses will look at your PICC entry site each shift. If you have any questions or concerns, you should talk to your nurse or doctor. The PICC and tubing should not be disconnected for showers or walks as there is a risk that it may become blocked and infected. If not in constant use, a small amount of fluid is 'flushed' into the line using a syringe by the nurse or doctor. The entry site will be dressed at least once a week. The dressing may need to be changed earlier if it is wet, lifting or not clean.

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

Possible problems with PICCs

Infection

It is possible for an infection to develop either inside the PICC or around the entry site. You should tell your doctor or nurse if:

- the entry site becomes red or swollen
- you notice discoloured fluid coming from the entry site
- if you notice any pain or bleeding from the PICC
- you feel sweats or shivers / temperatures

It is very important not to unnecessarily touch the PICC and always have clean hands when touching the PICC or near to it.

Clots

As the PICC is sitting in the bloodstream, it is possible for a blood clot (thrombosis) to form. If this occurs, the line may have to be removed. Sometimes medication is used to dissolve clots. You should tell your doctor or nurse if you notice any unusual swelling of your arm, hand or neck.

Will my PICC fall out?

As the PICC is very long (usually 35-55cm depending on your size) and secured by a special dressing, it is very unlikely to fall out. However, you should take care not to accidentally catch it or pull on it as this will affect its position. Never use force on your PICC.

How is a PICC removed?

When you no longer need the PICC it will be taken out. This is a simple procedure, done by the nurse, similar to taking out a cannula, a very long cannula. A sterile dressing will be put over the entry site. The site will be reviewed and redressed as needed until the skin has healed.

Please ask the staff if you have any further questions about your PICC.

Interpreter Services

Professional interpreters are available if you need help understanding or speaking English.

Interpreter services are free and confidential. You can ask for an interpreter if one is not offered to you. The staff will book the interpreter for you. If you need an interpreter so you can contact us, please call the telephone Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

Additional Information

Insertion Date:

Pressure Injectable? Yes No