

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Line

PICC Line

Your health care provider wants you to have a peripherally inserted central catheter, known as a PICC line. This catheter (a small, thin tube) is inserted into a vein in your upper arm and guided to a large vein (superior vena cava) in your chest.

The catheter is about 18 inches long. It will let you receive intravenous (IV) medicine or fluids. The line may also be used to take blood samples.

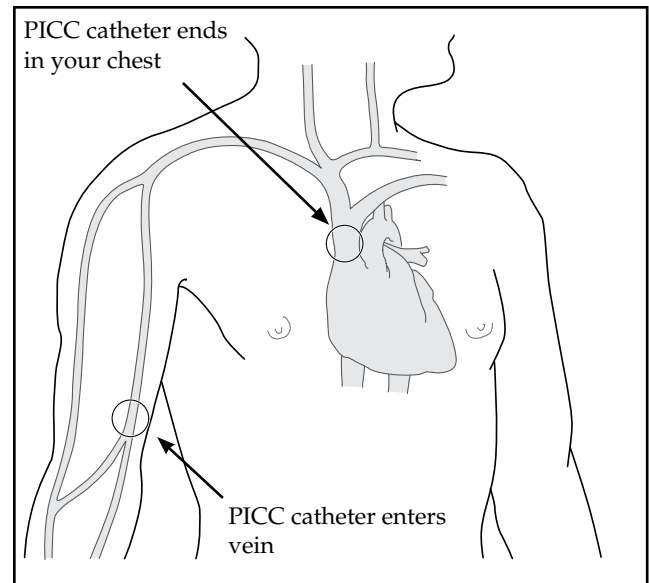
The procedure takes 30 to 60 minutes.

Before the Procedure

- A trained registered nurse will explain the procedure, benefits and risks to you, your family or both.
- You will need to lie in a hospital bed for the procedure.

During the Procedure

- The nurse will wear a gown, mask, cap and gloves for the procedure.
- He or she will clean your upper arm to your elbow with an antiseptic solution.
- The nurse will inject a numbing medicine (lidocaine) next to the vein in your upper arm.
- The nurse will access the vein and then insert the catheter into your upper arm vein.



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The PICC catheter is inserted through veins in your arm to the large vein in your chest called the superior vena cava.

- The nurse will thread the catheter up your arm vein and into the large vein in your chest.
- The drawing at right shows where the PICC line will go.
- After threading the catheter, the nurse will put a dressing on the insertion site.
- An X-ray will be taken to make sure the PICC tip is in the right location.

(over)

After the Procedure

- Your PICC site may bleed a small amount for up to 2 days.
- The sealed dressing on the insertion site will be changed within 24 to 48 hours. It will then need to be changed once a week or sooner if it starts to come off, gets wet or if it gets dirty (soiled). The dressing should be changed by a health care provider or trained caregiver.
- The PICC line will need flushing:
 - after each use
 - as instructed by your home care nurse or doctor.

Ask if you will be flushing the line yourself or if someone else will be doing that. If you will be doing it, you will need to receive training.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your doctor or home care nurse if:

- you have a fever
- the insertion site is red or if it has drainage coming from it
- there is bleeding at the insertion site that does not stop
- there are any problems with the PICC line, such as leaking or damage
- you have pain at the PICC site or in the arm
- you have a foul smell from the dressing
- you have swelling in the hand or arm on the side of the PICC
- you have redness, tenderness or a feeling of hardness above the PICC insertion site
- the dressing is coming off
- the catheter has moved farther out
- the catheter falls out.

If You Have Questions

Talk with your nurse or doctor if you have questions or concerns.