

# Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC): Care During Your Hospital Stay

## General Information

You have a peripherally inserted central catheter. It is known as a PICC.

A catheter (small, thin tube) is inserted into a vein in your upper arm and guided to a large vein in your chest (see picture at right).

The catheter is often used for drawing blood, giving intravenous (IV) antibiotics, nutrition or medicines. Not all lab tests are able to be drawn through the PICC.

Your PICC was inserted for this purpose:

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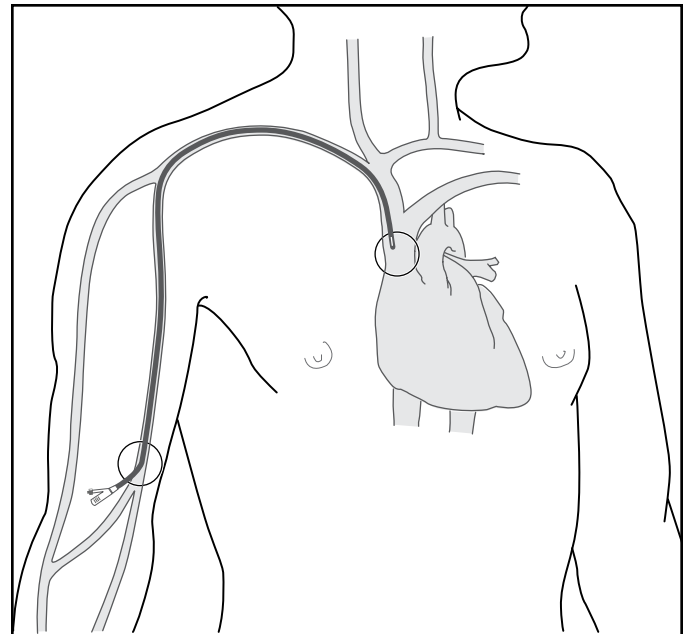
## PICC Care

Your bedside nurse or a nurse from the IV team will care for your PICC while you are in the hospital. You may have cares done in the hospital you may not need at home.

The PICC care is done to prevent an infection.

### ■ Dressing care

- Your nurse will change your dressing and clean the site every 7 days or as needed.
- Your nurse will check to make sure:
  - the dressing is secure to your skin so bacteria (germs) cannot collect where the catheter enters your skin.
  - a Biopatch<sup>®</sup> (antimicrobial disc) is placed where the catheter enters your skin



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**A catheter is inserted into a vein in your upper arm and guided to the superior vena cava in your chest.**

- the injection cap is clean with no blood inside the cap.
- the cap is screwed tightly to the end of the catheter.

### ■ Other care

- Your nurse will regularly flush your PICC.
- It is not recommended that you take a shower while you have a PICC. Water is not sterile and will increase your chance of getting the dressing wet. This can lead to an infection.

**(over)**

- Your nurse will clean your skin with CHG (chlorhexidine gluconate) cloths each day. The cloths kill germs on your skin.
- The solution used to cleanse your skin and the antimicrobial disc that goes under dressing both contain chlorhexidine gluconate. An allergic reaction is rare.
  - Your nurse will ask you if you have a known allergy, skin irritation or reaction to chlorhexidine skin wash or mouth wash.
  - If you have any skin irritation, difficulty breathing or other symptoms, use your call light and ask for help.

## How Can You Help Prevent a PICC Infection?

- If you do not see the members of your health care team clean their hands, ask them to do so.
- If you do not see the members of your health care team scrub the cap at the end of your catheter, ask them to do so.
- You will be asked to wear a mask and turn your head away from the catheter site during dressing changes.
- Tell your nurse right away if your dressing comes off, or if it becomes wet, bloody or dirty.
- Tell your nurse if you have any redness, warmth, increased drainage or pain at your PICC site.
- Ask your doctor or nurse every day how long you will need the PICC. (The sooner it is removed, the less likely the chance of infection.)