

PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) Line: What You Need To Know



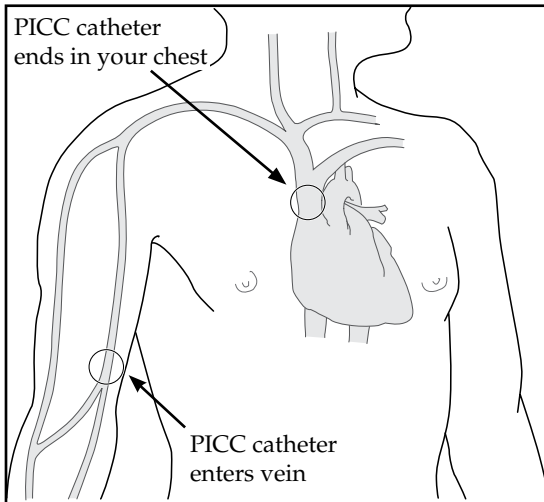
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What is a PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) Line?

A PICC (peripherally inserted center catheter) line is a catheter (small, thin tube) that is inserted into a vein in your upper arm and guided to a large vein (superior vena cava) in your chest.

Why is it Needed?

The PICC catheter will let you receive intravenous (IV) medicine or fluids. The line may also be used to take blood samples.



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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.

Before the Procedure

- A health care provider will explain the procedure to you, your family members or both. The provider will talk about the risks and benefits.
- 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
 - clean your upper arm to your elbow with an antiseptic solution
 - inject a numbing medicine (lidocaine) next to the vein in your upper arm
 - access the vein and then insert the catheter into your upper arm vein
 - thread the catheter up your arm vein and into the large vein in your chest
- The drawing on the first page shows where the PICC line will go.
- After threading the catheter, the nurse will put a dressing on the insertion site.

After the Procedure

- Your PICC site may bleed a small amount for up to 2 days.
- The sealed dressing on the insertion site will 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 health care provider 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.

Other Concerns

Pain

You may feel the initial needlestick when the numbing medicine (lidocaine) is given. You should have no pain or discomfort when:

- the nurse is threading the PICC line
- the PICC line is in your arm
- fluids or medicines are given through the PICC line.

Activity

You should avoid quick movements or high levels of activity with the affected arm. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (about the weight of two 1-gallon milk jugs).

Do not raise your affected arm above your head. Other normal arm movements will help to maintain good blood circulation around the PICC.

Complications (problems)

Problems as the result of a PICC line are rare, but like any other medical procedure, there is some risk. Your health care provider will talk to you about:

- signs of infection
- inflammation or swelling of tissues directly under your skin (cellulitis)
- blood clots (There is an increased chance of a blood clot when a catheter sits in a vein. Symptoms include swelling in the hand or arm.)
- vein swelling or inflammation (phlebitis)
- blockage of the catheter line.

Protecting the site

- Be careful when using sharp knives, scissors or other sharp objects near the catheter.
- Avoid getting the area around the catheter wet while bathing, showering, swimming or doing any other type of activity that will put the PICC directly in water. You will need to cover the area with a piece of plastic. Ask your health care provider for directions.

Dressing care

- Keep the dressing clean and dry.
- The dressing should be changed by a health care provider.
- Your dressing will be changed once a week and as needed when you are in the hospital.

You will receive instructions on how often your dressing needs to be changed from your doctor or the home health nurse who will see you after you leave the hospital.

- Remember, water is not sterile. Keep the PICC dressing dry. You can take a shower if you wear a special waterproof dressing. To make one yourself:
 - Place enough plastic wrap or a garbage bag to cover the dressing.
 - Cover the edges well with tape.
 - Remove the waterproof dressing when you are done with the shower.
- Before you leave the hospital, arrangements will be made regarding your PICC dressing changes.

Catheter care

Check every day to make sure the injection cap is screwed tightly to the end of the catheter.

- If your PICC line has a clamp, make sure it is clamped at all times when you are not using the catheter.
- Your line will need routine flushing. Your home health nurse can show you how to do this.



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