
Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

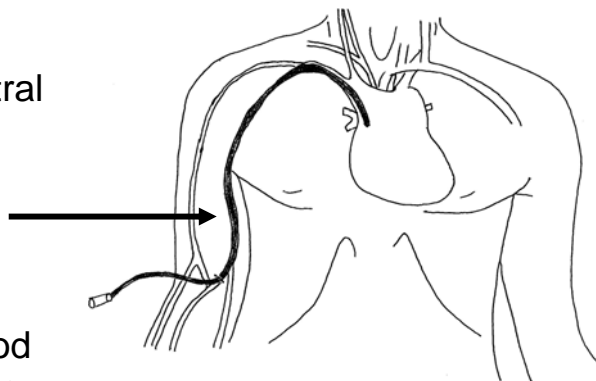
What is a PICC?

PICC is short for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter.

A PICC is a thin tube inserted into a vein in your arm.

It is used to give medications, nutrition, blood products or to take blood samples for testing. The tubing is also called a catheter.

A PICC can stay in for several weeks, months or up to one year.



A PICC needs special care to keep it clean and working well. This includes regular dressing changes and flushes. A flush is when a fluid, called normal saline, is gently pushed through the tubing to keep it clear and working well.

What are the benefits of having a PICC?

- A PICC last longer than an intravenous (IV). An IV site needs to change every 4 days. A PICC can be used for up to 1 year when needed. This means you have less pokes into your skin to give medication or take blood samples.
- Some medications can irritate or damage small veins. A PICC is put into a larger vein to prevent problems.
- You may be able to go home with a PICC and finish a treatment started in the hospital.

How is a PICC put in?

- An IV Team nurse with special education and training puts the PICC in. This is most often done in the Diagnostic Imaging Department.
- During the procedure the nurses in the room are dressed in sterile gowns and wear gloves and masks.

Turn over →

How is a PICC put in? (*continued*)

- Your veins are checked with an ultrasound machine to select the best one for the PICC. A small needle with a local anaesthetic is put into the skin over the vein to numb the area.
- The nurse then puts the PICC in explaining the procedure to you as this is done.
- The procedure takes about 1 hour.
- A chest x-ray is done after to make sure the PICC is in the correct place.

What should I expect after the PICC is put in?

- An IV nurse comes to the nursing unit to change the dressing the day after the PICC is put in. The dressing is then changed every week by a nurse.
- The dressing must be kept clean and dry. You may shower as long as you keep the site dry. Your nurse will tell you how to shower.
- Contact your nurse if you:
 - see any redness or swelling at the site
 - have pain or discomfort at the site
 - have a fever
- If the catheter looks damaged or like it has been partially pulled out, contact your nurse.

Who do I talk to if I have questions or concerns?

- Feel free to speak with your unit nurse.
- You can call the IV nurse at ext. 33591. Be prepared to leave a message and the IV nurse will call you back or come to see you.