



GUIDE



Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)



The Ottawa | L'Hôpital
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Disclaimer

This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

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Your doctor has requested that you receive a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC). This device will let you receive intravenous medications, fluids and blood products. You may also use the line to have blood work drawn.

Please take a few minutes to read this handout before you get your PICC. You can write any comments or questions you have at the end of this handout. You may discuss any questions or concerns with your nurse or doctor. A member of the PICC Service will also be available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

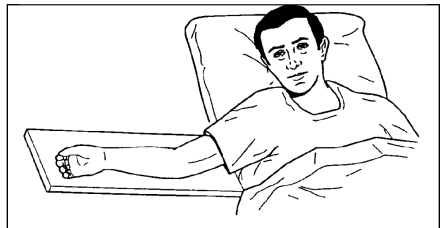
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Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

- A PICC is a special intravenous (IV) catheter that is soft and flexible. It is inserted into a vein in your arm and is then advanced into a large vein in your chest called the superior vena cava.
- Most patients feel little or no discomfort during this procedure.
- A PICC is inserted by a specially trained registered nurse at your bedside or in a clinic room.
- Allow 2 hours for the entire procedure.
- The PICC can be used to give fluids, medications, and blood products or take blood tests.
- Most people need a PICC for a few weeks or months but it can stay in place for a longer period if required.

During the procedure

- You will need to lay flat and keep your arm straight. The nurse will make you as comfortable as possible.
- Your arm will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution and sterile towels will be placed around your arm and on your body. The nurse will be wearing a hat, mask, sterile gloves and gown. This is to help prevent infection.
- An ultrasound machine will be used to locate a vein in your arm.
- A “freezing” medication will be injected into your upper arm to numb the area where the PICC will be inserted. Please let the nurse know if you have allergies to lidocaine or other types of freezing/numbing drugs.



- A small needle will be used to enter your vein. You can expect to feel some pressure during this part of the procedure. You will not feel the PICC as it slides into position
- The PICC will be secured to your skin and covered with a dressing to keep it clean.
- A chest x-ray will be done to show the location of the PICC tip.
- When your PICC tip is in the right place it is ready for use.

Your PICC needs special care to keep it clean and working well. It is only to be used for the prescribed treatment (medication/fluids). In hospital your nurse will care for the PICC. If you go home with your PICC, you and your home care nurse will take care of the PICC. ***It is very important that you keep your PICC and supplies free from germs.***



Dressing

- You may have a small amount of bleeding in the first 24 hours.
- Your nurse will change the dressing within 48 hours after insertion and then usually every 6-7 days.
- Keep the dressing **clean, dry and in place**. (This means no swimming; protect it with plastic wrap/bag when showering).
- **If the dressing becomes loose, wet or damaged then contact your nurse.** A new dressing should be applied.
- The PICC will be flushed regularly by your nurse.

Activity

- Your PICC should not interfere with your social or home life. You can continue most activities as before and as your medical condition permits. Use your arm as you feel comfortable.

To prevent damage to your PICC or your veins:

- Keep the PICC well secured with the dressing intact to prevent the PICC from getting caught or pulled. It is important that it remains in the same position that it was placed.
- Avoid activities that require repetitive arm movements (such as shovelling, gardening or upper body sports and exercise).
- Avoid lifting weights or heavy objects (such as a 10 pound sack of potatoes).

At home call your home care nurse as soon as possible if you experience any of the following symptoms.

- The dressing becomes loose.
- Change in length of catheter outside of your body.
- Your PICC becomes damaged (fold the PICC over on itself, above the damaged area, cover with sterile gauze and secure with a piece of tape).
- Excessive bleeding (dressing is soaked with blood).
- Fever and/or chills.
- On the side where your PICC is inserted: Pain, warmth, redness or swelling in your arm, shoulder or up the side of your neck.
- Any leakage of fluid from the PICC or the PICC insertion site.

Completion of therapy

- A nurse can remove the PICC in your hospital bed or at home. A band aid or gauze will be placed over the site and this can be removed the next day.
- There is typically no discomfort with this procedure.

Comments: _____
