

### **How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?**

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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## **Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters (PICCs)**

**This leaflet is designed to give you information about your PICC line and how to care for it.**

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice & Liaison Service on 01296 316042

**Safe & compassionate care,**

**every time**

## Introduction

The best way for you to receive your treatment is through a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC), often referred to as a PICC line.

## What is a PICC?

A PICC is a long, flexible tube, (that will be called a line). It is inserted into a large vein in the upper arm. It is threaded up the arm until the tip sits in a large vein just above the heart.

The PICC is made of a thin, soft, non-irritant material so it can be left in place for many weeks or months, depending on how long you need it. This makes it possible for you to have your treatment without the need for further needles to be inserted into your veins.

It can be used for giving treatments such as chemotherapy and antibiotics. It can also be used to take blood samples or to give blood transfusions.

## Who to contact

If at any time you are worried about your PICC, you should not hesitate to contact the Nurse or department where you are receiving your treatment. They will be more than happy to discuss your concerns and, if necessary, check your line.

### **IV Therapy/OPAT Team:**

Mon- Sun 8.30am-4.30pm Tel: 01296 315485  
or 07810 181 584

Bank Holidays: 9.00am- 4.30pm (on call basis)  
Tel: 07810 181584

### **Cancer Care and Haematology Unit, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:**

Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm Tel: 01296 315120

### **Sunrise Cancer Unit, Wycombe Hospital:**

Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm Tel: 01494 426238

### **Ward 5, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:**

Tel: 01296 316336

### **Acute Oncology Team:** 01296 315139 or

Mon – Fri Bleep 582 via switchboard

### **Stoke Mandeville Hospital Accident and Emergency**

Tel: 01296 315664

## Baths and showers

You can do both. The dressing is splash proof and you should wrap cling film around your arm to add extra protection. Do **not** soak your arm underwater, and always dab the dressing dry if it becomes wet.

Specialist arm protectors are available which you may wish to purchase (ask the unit or specialist team looking after your care).

You should **never** go swimming or use hydrotherapy with a PICC in place.

## Exercise

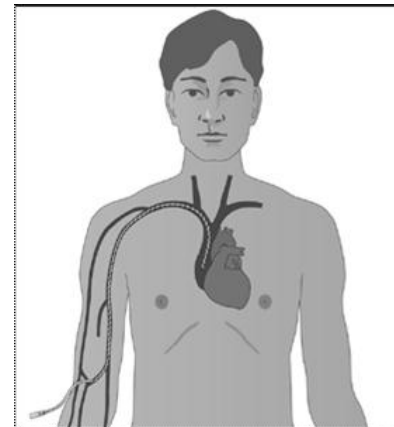
It is not recommended to play sport like golf or do upper body weight lifting as it has a risk of moving the PICC inside you. Normal daily activities can be continued.

## How is the PICC removed?

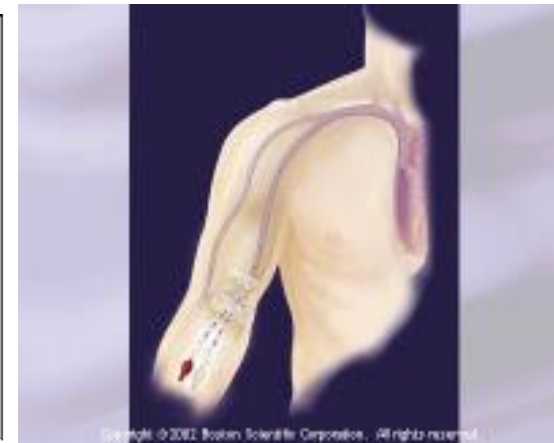
When the clinician decides that you no longer need a PICC, it will be removed. This is usually done by a Nurse in an outpatient department or in your home. It is gently pulled out - this is painless and takes only a few minutes. A dressing will be applied to the break in your skin, which should be left on for 24 hours and can then be removed.

## How is the line put in?

The line will be put in whilst you are in hospital or as an outpatient by a specially trained Nurse or Health Professional. Some local anaesthetic will be used to prevent any pain during the procedure. Once in place, it will be fixed with a securement device and a clear dressing. Your line will be confirmed in the correct position on insertion or you may need a chest x-ray to check your line is in the right place.



The line is threaded through the vein until the end is near to your heart.






The end of the line exits the skin and is secured with a dressing

## Possible risks and complications

Every procedure carries some risks and complications. Before the line is inserted the nurse or doctor will fully explain these risks to you to ensure you are happy to proceed. You will also be asked for your consent before going ahead.

If after you have had the line inserted, and you notice any of the following, you should inform your nurse or doctor as soon as possible:

- Increased redness around the point of entry (see visual infusion phlebitis (VIP) chart below)
- Fresh bleeding or discharge at the point of entry
- Swelling, redness or pain anywhere in your arm, chest or neck
- You feel feverish or have a temperature

VIP score	Description	Example	Action
0	Healthy site, no signs of phlebitis		Continue routine monitoring
1	Pain or redness at IV site		Inform IV team / unit & observe site
2+	Pain and redness Or Swelling Or Any pus		Inform IV Team or unit and request medical review.

## Looking after your PICC

Once in place, it is important that you understand how to take care of your line to prevent it coming out and / or getting infected.

- **Clean your hands:** If you ever need to handle your PICC, always wash your hands with soap and water and dry your hands thoroughly first.
- **Keep the dressing clean and dry:** Once a week a Nurse will clean the area where the line goes into your skin and change your dressing and bung at the end of the line. However, if at any time your dressing becomes loose or detached from your skin, you should try to secure the line with tape or a bandage and contact your Nurse to arrange for a new dressing to be applied as soon as possible.

- **Check your line daily:** To help monitor the site where you line is inserted, your Nurse may give you a VIP chart or see the chart on page 4 to review the site daily.

- If you can see more line coming out of the insertion site than before, this might be a sign that the PICC has moved. Let your Nurse know before the line is used again. You may need to have another chest x-ray to re-check the position.