

Patient advice sheet

Looking after your Catheter (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter: PICC)

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

Introduction

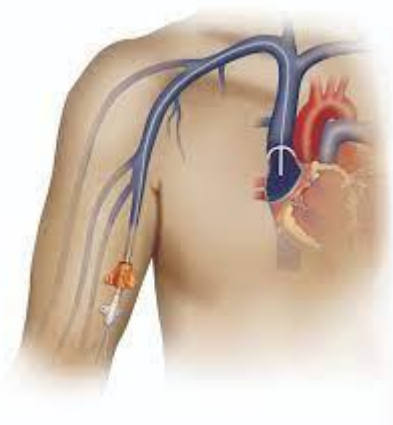
The most effective way for you to receive your treatment is through a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter, often referred to as a PICC line.

What is a PICC?

A PICC is a long, flexible tube, (often called a line) which 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 intravenous feeding - Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN), chemotherapy and antibiotics. It can also be used to take blood samples or to give blood transfusions.

How is the PICC inserted?

The PICC will be put in whilst you are in hospital or as an outpatient by a specially trained Nurse or Health Professional. Local anaesthetic will be used to prevent any discomfort during the procedure. Once in place, it will be fixed with a securement device (Securacath – orange clip) and a clear dressing. It will be confirmed that your line is in the correct position on insertion or you may need a chest x-ray.



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 potential risks and complications. Before the PICC is inserted these risk will be fully explained to you to ensure you agree to proceed. You will also be asked for your consent before going ahead.

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

- Ongoing 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
- Increased redness around the point of entry (see visual infusion phlebitis (VIP) chart below)

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

Looking after your PICC

Once in place, it is important you understand how to care for your PICC 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 health professional 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 unit/nurse to arrange for a new dressing to be applied as soon as possible.

- **Check your line daily:** To help monitor the site where your 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.

Baths and showers

You can do both. The dressing is waterproof 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).

Swimming

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 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. The PICC is gently eased out first, then the securacath is removed – this can cause a bit of discomfort and takes only a few minutes. A dressing will be applied to the break in your skin, which should be left on for 24/48 hours before being removed.

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 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 181 584

Cancer Care and Haematology Unit, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:

Mon – Fri: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Tel: 01296 315125

Sunrise Cancer Unit, Wycombe Hospital:

Mon – Fri: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Tel: 01494 426238

Ward 5, Stoke Mandeville Hospital:

24 hours

Tel: 01296 316336

Acute Oncology Team:

Mon – Fri: 8.00am – 6.00pm

Tel: 01296 315139

Stoke Mandeville Hospital Accident and Emergency

24 hours

Tel: 01296 315664

How you can help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & 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 and 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 as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

If you need advice or further assistance, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS):

call 01296 316042 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.