Home Care for a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

You have a tube placed in your arm called a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter or PICC. You may hear your cancer care team call it a "pick" line. It is important to take proper care steps for your PICC line at home.

Flushing the PICC

When to do it. You will need to wash out or "flush" your PICC every day with a heparin solution. Heparin is a medicine that keeps blood clots from blocking the tube inside your body. Nurses will show you how to do this. Tell your cancer care team if you are allergic to heparin.

How to Flush the PICC. Home health care will provide you with pre-filled syringes. Follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.

2. Scrub the injection cap well with an alcohol wipe for 15 seconds.

3. Remove the cap from the syringe. Twist the syringe tip into the injection cap at the end of the PICC.

4. Unclamp the PICC and push all of the saline or heparin into the PICC using the "push and pause" method—your nurse will show you how to do it. NEVER USE FORCE to flush it.

5. Re-clamp the PICC after flushing. You always need to close the PICC clamps when the line is not in use to prevent air getting in or blood leaking out.

If the PICC has more than one lumen, repeat the flushing steps for each one. Use a new syringe for each lumen.

If you use your PICC to take medicines, you also need to flush it with normal saline before and after each dose. Normal saline is a liquid that helps keep the PICC line clean.

1. Flush with 10 mL of normal saline BEFORE each dose.

2. AFTER your dose of medicine, flush the catheter with 10-20 mL of normal saline.

3. THEN flush with a pre-filled syringe of heparin.

If Your PICC Will Not Flush

Check to make sure the PICC clamp is open.

If the clamp is open, your PICC may be plugged. Call your cancer care team. They can use medicine to unblock the line.

Questions?

Contact your cancer care team via MyChart or call
_____.

In an emergency, call 911 or go to your closest emergency department.