

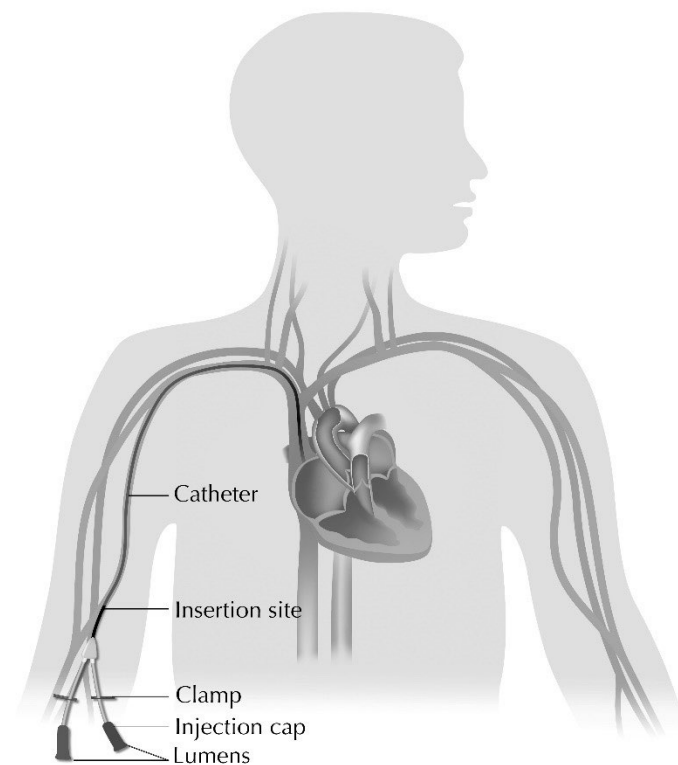
Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

What is a PICC?

A peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) is a thin, flexible tube about 20 inches long that your care team inserts into a vein in your arm. You may hear your cancer care team call it a “pick” line.

Why do I need a PICC?

A PICC allows your care team to give treatments such as antibiotics, high-calorie liquids, chemotherapy, and blood transfusions, and as a way to get samples of your blood. This is easier on you than getting an IV or needle poke each visit.



A specially trained team places your PICC. They insert a needle into a vein in your arm above the bend of the elbow. The PICC goes through the needle into the vein, and then the team removes the needle. The end of the PICC sits in a large vein just above the heart. After the PICC is in place, we will check to make sure the end of the catheter is in the right place in your body. Once we know for sure, we can use the PICC to draw blood and give treatments.

One or more tubes called lumens come out of your arm. Each lumen has an injection cap where your team puts medicine into the catheter or draws blood. A PICC can stay in place for weeks.

Care of the PICC Dressing

A clear dressing and an anchor device hold the PICC in place. Your health care team or home health nurse will change the dressing every 7 days or when it gets soiled or loose.

Only a trained professional should change the dressing. You should NEVER touch the insertion site or PICC under the dressing. Call your health care team if your dressing gets soiled or loose, or if moisture appears under the clear dressing.

How can I keep my PICC from getting infected?

- Make sure your hands are clean before touching the exposed part of your PICC. You can use soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Be sure anyone touching the PICC has clean hands.
- BEFORE using the injection cap, scrub it well for 15 seconds with an alcohol wipe.
- When showering, wrap the insertion site with plastic wrap and tape to keep it dry. NEVER let the insertion site be underwater. When you take off the plastic wrap and tape, be careful not to remove the dressing or lift the edge of it.

Watch for These Signs

Some side effects may happen in the arm with the PICC in the first 10 days after placement:

- Bruising
- Pain or tenderness
- Redness
- Slight swelling

Put a warm pad on your arm as soon as these signs appear. For the next three days, apply heat for about 30 minutes four to five times daily. Your arm should feel better within one to two days. If the symptoms get worse, call your cancer care team.

If you have any of the following signs, call your cancer care team right away at the number below:

- Bleeding, drainage, or leaking where the PICC goes into your arm
- Chills
- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) degrees or higher.

Activity Limits

- Avoid activities with repetitive arm motion such as golf, tennis, or pushing a vacuum. These motions could move the catheter out of place.
- Do not let the arm with the PICC be under water. Avoid swimming and soaking in hot tubs or saunas. The PICC dressing must stay dry.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds. A gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds.
- Avoid any activity that causes you to sweat.

Showering

You may shower with your PICC in place. Wrap the insertion site with plastic wrap and tape to keep it dry. NEVER let the insertion site be underwater.

When you take off the plastic wrap and tape, be careful not to remove the dressing or lift the edge of it.

If the PICC Comes Out

If your PICC comes completely or partly out of your arm, do not panic. Cover the area with gauze and apply gentle pressure until bleeding stops. Put a bandage over the area and call your cancer care team.

If your PICC pulls out during an infusion, stop the pump or infusion. Cover the area with a clean towel if the sterile dressing has moved or torn. Call your cancer care team.

Questions?

Contact your cancer care team via MyChart or call

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