

Information about having a

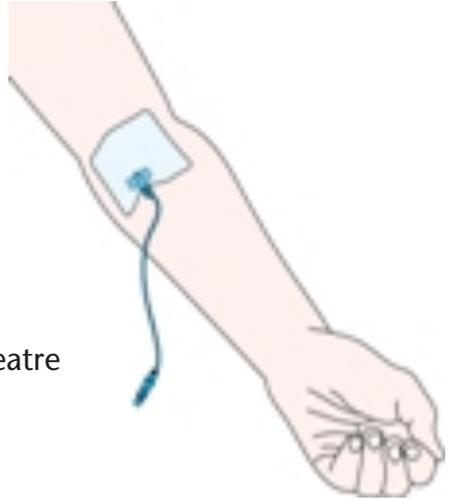
# **PICC Line Inserted**

(Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter)



## **What is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)?**

A PICC is a thin hollow, flexible tube (often called a catheter). One end of the catheter is fixed to the upper side of the arm; the other ends in a large blood vessel in your chest. The PICC allows the doctor or nurse to give medication, nutrition, chemotherapy or antibiotics into your vein (see diagram) or to take bloods from your veins. We can insert it on either the left or right upper side of your arm.



### **Who will do it?**

A specially trained nurse or doctor.

### **Where will it be done?**

In a treatment room, operating theatre or in the x-ray department.

### **How long will it take?**

This can vary for a number of reasons however you can expect to be in the clinical area between 1-3 hours.

### **Why have you been referred for a PICC Line?**

Your doctor or nurse has suggested inserting a PICC Line because of the treatment you are going to get. Reasons for choosing to insert the PICC Line will vary, and will depend upon your medical condition, and your proposed treatment.

### **When can I discuss the procedure?**

You can discuss this with your referring doctor at the clinic or in the ward, and also with the nurse or doctor before your procedure.

## **Consent**

We will ask you to sign a consent form before the procedure. Please make sure that you ask any questions you may have. When signing the form you should know what we plan to do, alternative treatments, and any risks or complications of the procedure.

## **What do I need to do before the procedure?**

You may already be in hospital or we may ask you to attend as an out-patient. You may need certain blood tests but we will discuss this with you.

If you are allowed, and are able to, we would recommend that you drink plenty of fluids (not alcohol) the day before and the morning of your procedure. This helps the veins to fill up making the insertion of the PICC easier.

For the procedure, we would advise you to wear something loose with short sleeves, or we can give you a hospital gown to wear.

Please tell the staff if you are taking any blood thinning medication.

## **What happens during the procedure?**

This is a sterile procedure. The technique may vary but generally you will lie on your back on the procedure trolley, examination couch or x-ray table.

We will clean the area over the vein with antiseptic solution.

We will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area. You may experience some slight discomfort when we inject the local anaesthetic. This will not last long.

The nurse or doctor will use ultrasound equipment to guide a fine needle into the vein, followed by a fine wire. They then pass the catheter over the wire and into the blood vessel underneath the skin.

They then apply a dressing to hold the PICC Line in place.

You will need a chest x ray after the procedure to check the position of the catheter.

### **What happens afterwards?**

If you are having your procedure as an in-patient you will return to your ward. The nursing staff will monitor the puncture site to make sure there is no bleeding.

If you are having the procedure as an out-patient you will either go home or return to the clinical unit you were referred from. We will give you instructions about caring and maintaining your PICC Line as well as what to do if problems arise.

### **Are there any risks?**

This is a safe procedure but as with any medical treatments some risks and complications can arise.

- **Failure to insert:** On rare occasions it may be difficult to insert the catheter. This may result in multiple attempts, or we cannot insert the catheter in your vein. We will advise you about other methods of accessing your veins if we can not place your PICC.
- **Misplaced tip:** Occasionally the tip of the PICC may go to the wrong place. This will not harm you but we would have to reposition the tip into the correct place.
- **Bruising or bleeding:** some bruising or bleeding may occur after we insert the catheter. The amount of bruising or bleeding may be due to your medical condition or medication that you are taking.
- **Dislodged catheter:** If a length of PICC becomes more visible on your arm please tell your nurse or doctor immediately.

- **Blood clot:** Very rarely a blood clot can collect around the catheter. This would normally result in additional medical treatment. Please tell your nurse or doctor if your arm with the PICC becomes swollen and, or painful.
- **Infection:** The catheter is a direct route into your body, and it can sometimes become infected. This might result in additional medical treatment. Signs of infection include a high temperature, flu like symptoms including hot and cold sweats, shivering, pain, redness and swelling at the catheter exit site. If you experience any of these contact NHS 24 on 111, your local emergency department or the doctor or nurse caring for you.
- **Blocked catheter:** Sometimes your PICC Line may block; this would stop you using the PICC Line. It may be possible to unblock the catheter but if this is not possible we may need to remove it.
- **Vein irritation:** Some patients may have pain and redness along the vein where the catheter sits. This usually happens in the first seven days after insertion and will depend on your individual treatment. To prevent this from occurring we may give you a hot pack home with you. You should apply the hot pack to your upper arm 4 times every day for 3-5 days. Tell your doctor or nurse if your arm becomes red or painful immediately.

### **How long will the PICC Line be in place?**

Your PICC will usually stay in place for the length of your treatment. However, some patients do need replacement catheters.

### **Caring for your PICC Line**

Your district nurse or treatment centre will provide your weekly PICC Line care.

Sometimes we can teach patients to care for their own catheter. You can discuss this with the team looking after you.

Try to keep the handling of your PICC Line to a minimum.

### **Showering and bathing**

You can shower over the transparent (see-through) dressing but do not use soap or shower gel in this area. We may give you a protective sleeve to wear on your arm. If your dressing becomes wet or you think water has got under your dressing please contact your treatment centre or district nurse to replace your dressing.

### **What if the PICC Line falls out?**

If the PICC line partly falls out, secure it in place with a sterile dressing and contact your nurse or doctor immediately. If the PICC line comes out completely, press on the hole where the PICC line came out for a few minutes or until any bleeding stops. Tell your nurse or doctor and keep the PICC line so that your nurse or doctor can check it.

### **How and when will my PICC be removed?**

We usually remove PICC's at the end of your treatment. We rarely, remove these because of problems.

Usually, we remove your PICC in a clinical area e.g. out-patient department.

We will remove the dressing and gently pull the catheter out. There should be no discomfort. We then apply a small dressing which you can remove after 24 hours.

### **Further Information**

If you have any questions please telephone the number on your appointment card or letter.

Please contact the team who referred you for your PICC Line for information relating to your treatment.



