



Information for
patients and
carers

**Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter
(PICC)**

Central Venous Access Team

This information leaflet aims to help answer some of the questions you may have about your Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC).

Why do I need a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)?

A PICC allows for medications, fluids and antibiotics to be given directly into the bloodstream (intravenous). It can be used for taking blood samples. Some drugs can irritate and cause damage to the smaller veins found in the lower arms, therefore, a PICC is more suitable. Some drugs may also be required for an extended period of a week or even longer. By giving these drugs into a large vein, it reduces irritation as it enters the bloodstream.

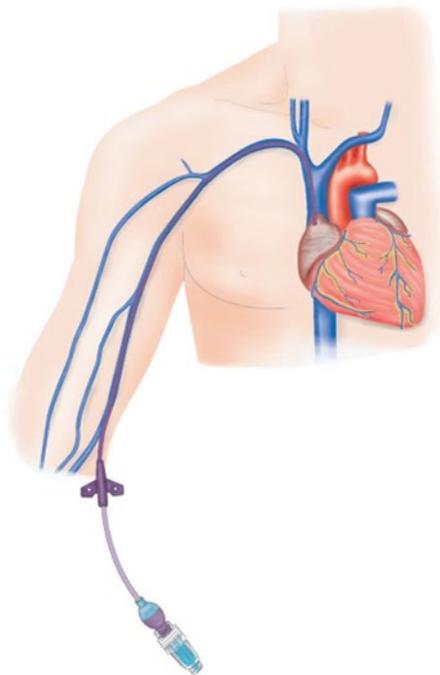
A PICC can be used for:

- Intravenous fluids and drugs
- Intravenous feeding/nutrition
- Taking blood samples
- Giving blood or other blood products
- Chemotherapy

What is a PICC?

A PICC is a long thin, hollow flexible tube inserted into one of the veins of the upper arm and passed through to sit in a large vein just outside of your heart. The length depends on how tall you are and where the insertion site is. Usually, it is 38–52cm long and the nurse will take some measurements prior to starting the procedure; there will be approximately 5cm of the line which comes out of your arm where your specific intravenous therapy will be connected. The space through which the fluid is infused is called a lumen.

You may have one or two lumens depending on the treatment you are to have. Not all patients are suitable for a PICC and a nurse specialist will assess you before inserting. If you are not suitable for a PICC the nurse will discuss other options for intravenous access including short term cannulas and other long term tunnelled lines.



How is a PICC placed?

The specialist nurse will discuss any questions or concerns that you may have and ask you to sign a consent form if you have agreed to have a PICC placed. The procedure will be done using recommended equipment; it will be done at the bedside if you are an inpatient, or in a clinic room as an outpatient. The nurse will identify the most suitable veins in your arm using an ultrasound machine.

A sensor will be placed on your chest and an ECG sticker to your right shoulder and left hip during the procedure (this is to allow the nurse to confirm correct placement of the PICC).

The nurse will then clean the skin of your arm with an antiseptic sponge and cover you in a sterile drape. Local anaesthetic will be injected into your arm to numb the area, this may sting a little at first. A needle will be put into the vein, an introducer will widen the hole and the PICC tube inserted. You should only feel a little pressure on your arm during the procedure which may feel a little uncomfortable. A dressing will be applied at the end of the procedure to secure the PICC in place. Placement of the PICC is confirmed at the time of insertion using a navigational system and ECG technology, but sometimes a chest X-ray will be taken to confirm the PICC tip is in the correct position before the tube can be used.

How will my PICC be looked after?

If you are in hospital, the ward nurses will care for the PICC. The specialist nurses will also be available to discuss any concerns and will visit you during your stay.

Sometimes it is possible for your therapy to continue at home or as an outpatient. If this should happen, there will be a team of nurses involved who will look after the tube and renew the dressing and needle-free bung on a weekly basis or as needed. If your PICC is not being used it will still need to be flushed once a week when the dressing is done to ensure it remains patent and usable.

How do I look after my PICC?

Most activities can be continued with care. It is best to avoid strenuous arm activities such as tennis and golf as these can dislodge the line. Swimming should also be avoided due to increased risk of infections. It

is possible to bath and shower with care. Plastic sleeves are available on prescription if your PICC is to stay in for a long period.

Try to keep the clear dressing dry and avoid submerging your arm in water. This will reduce the risk of an infection.

If your dressing becomes wet, dirty or loose it will need changing to prevent any infection and prevent the PICC from falling out. It is advisable to contact the nurses, so this can be renewed. Unless you have been taught to care for your PICC by the specialist nursing team, we would advise you not to attempt to change the dressing yourself or by a family member.

If you notice any redness, pain, swelling or oozing around the PICC or in your arm, inform the nurses or doctor.

If you are at home and suddenly develop an unexplained temperature above 38°C and feel shivery and have flu-like symptoms, you should attend your local hospital emergency department immediately.

Are there any risks in having a PICC?

There are some risks and complications associated with having a PICC.

These include:

- **Infection** - you may notice redness, tenderness or oozing around the insertion site or suffer from flu like symptoms, shivering or a raised temperature. It is important to tell a nurse or doctor if this happens
- **Bleeding and bruising** - there may be some bleeding initially after insertion, but this should stop after some pressure is applied. Any bruising will disappear after a few days
- **Thrombus or blood clot** - If a blood clot forms this will be noticeable by swelling and pain in the arm. It is important that you tell a nurse or doctor if this happens

- **Sometimes the PICC can move from its original insertion position.** If there is doubt about where the PICC tip lies, then a chest x-ray will be performed to confirm PICC tip position
- **Sometimes the PICC cannot be inserted when the vein goes into spasm or there is unusual vein structure**

The specialist nurse will discuss these in more detail with you prior to insertion.

What will happen when I no longer need my PICC?

When your treatment is finished, the PICC will be removed. A dry dressing will be applied which can be removed after 24 hours.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact,

Central Venous Access Team Specialist Nurses:

Extension: 3057

Telephone: 01772 523057

Monday - Friday: 08:30-16:30

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ییچھپیا یں یبھ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہ ی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ حروف كبيره و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعده في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما

Department: INCS - Central Venous Access Team (CVAT)

Division: Surgery

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