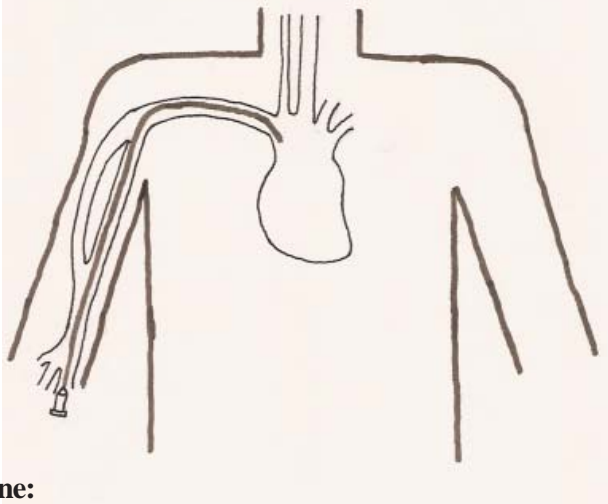


# Caring for Your Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

## WHAT IS A PERIPHERALLY INSERTED CENTRAL CATHETER?

A peripherally inserted central catheter, often called a "PICC line," is a long, very thin, flexible tube that is usually placed into one of the large veins in the arm, often just above or just below the elbow. This tube is threaded into a large vein above the right side of the heart.



**Line:**

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHY ARE PICC LINES USED?

The PICC line will be used to give IV (intravenous) medicines or fluids. Because the tube is so small and flexible, the line can last several weeks to months, which means fewer needle pokes and less pain.

The PICC line can be flushed and capped off when not in use. When it is time to give medicine, the medicine is connected to the PICC line and disconnected again when the medicine is finished.

## PICC LINE CARE

These are the special things that you will need to learn:

- preventing infection
- flushing the PICC line
- giving the medicine
- solving problems
- knowing when and who to call for help

A nurse will teach you how to do all these things and will be available for questions. Home care nurses will also come to your home to change the dressing over the line.

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## PREVENTING INFECTION

It is very important to prevent infection. An infection might require removal of the line. **Cleanliness is a must!** The nurse will show you how to keep your supplies sterile, so that no bacteria can enter the line and cause an infection. The dressing and cap must be changed weekly. Hands should be washed well before handling the line.

## FLUSHING THE PICC LINE

### Giving the medicine and flushing the line

The PICC line must be flushed so fluids will flow easily. If the line becomes clogged, it may have to be removed. A nurse will teach you how to flush the line and give medicines.

## GENERAL PICC LINE CARE:

- No strenuous activity or heavy lifting for first 48 hours after line is placed.
- Never use scissors to remove tape/dressing from around the line.
- Always tape line to your arm to prevent it from snagging on objects.
- Cover with plastic when showering so the dressing does not get wet. (Waterproof cast covers work well.) Do not let ends of line hang in the bathwater.
- Swimming and submersion are not allowed.
- Change dressing/cap every 7 days or sooner if dressing starts to lift up.
- No rough or contact sports as line may move or be damaged.
- To prevent damage to line, do not use pins, sharp clamps or scissors near your line.
- Avoid having dental work done while the line is in place as bacteria can be released into the bloodstream and attach onto the end of the line. If dental work is necessary, tell the dentist about the line at least 5 days before the dental work.

## QUESTIONS?

These sheets are not specific to your child but provide general information. If you have any questions, please call:

Home care: \_\_\_\_\_

Supply company: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever, chills</li> <li>• Soreness, redness, or pus at the line insertion site</li> <li>• Swollen arm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take temperature</li> <li>• Call doctor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flushing problems</li> <li>• Unable to push medicine or fluids into PICC line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line may be clamped</li> <li>• Line may be kinked</li> <li>• Line may be clotted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclamp it</li> <li>• Remove the kink</li> <li>• If not kinked or clamped, <b>do not</b> force the solution into the tube. Call the home care nurse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaking from the line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cap on PICC line not screwed on tightly</li> <li>• A hole in the line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tighten the injection cap</li> <li>• Check the line for a tear</li> <li>• If you see a leak in the line, clamp it or fold it over and pinch it between the leak and the skin and call your home care nurse right away.</li> <li>• If you have trouble breathing or chest pain, lie on left side and call 911.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICC line accidentally comes out</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press down on the site for at least 5 minutes</li> <li>• Apply antibacterial ointment and cover it with a bandage</li> <li>• Call your doctor or home care nurse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness of skin where the tape was</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitivity to tape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May need to have dressing changed and type of tape used</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness and/or tenderness of upper arm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanical Phlebitis (vein irritation from line) which may occur within 1st few days after line placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is not an infection</li> <li>• Apply warm packs</li> <li>• Notify MD/RN</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of exposed line is increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line has been pulled out partially or completely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not push line back in</li> <li>• Cover with gauze</li> <li>• Call home care nurse/MD</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whooshing sound in ear</li> <li>• Numbness/tingling in arm</li> <li>• Discomfort in the jaw, ear, teeth or face on PICC side of body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line may have moved</li> <li>• Line causing nerve irritation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop medication</li> <li>• Notify MD/RN</li> </ul>