

Peripherally Inserted Central Venous Catheter (PICC)

Information for patients

Why have a PICC?

Your doctor has recommended a PICC be inserted as your treatment requires frequent or continuous administration of Medications or fluids directly into your bloodstream.

With repeated needle insertions for treatment the veins in the hands and arms can be temporarily damaged and repeated needles can be painful and uncomfortable.

A PICC avoids this problem and is intended to provide a more comfortable, convenient and safe way for you to receive your treatment.

With a PICC, irritating medications such as chemotherapy and antibiotics can be given into a large central vein. This can also allow for rapid infusion, avoiding damage to your veins. A PICC can also be used for the administration of blood products and nutrient solutions.

Sometimes a small computerised pump or a bottle may be attached to your PICC. This allows medication to be given continuously over several days to a week. It also allows you to have your treatment while you are not in the hospital, e.g. at home or during daily trips for radiotherapy.

The PICC may also be used for taking samples of your blood for testing.

How is the PICC inserted?

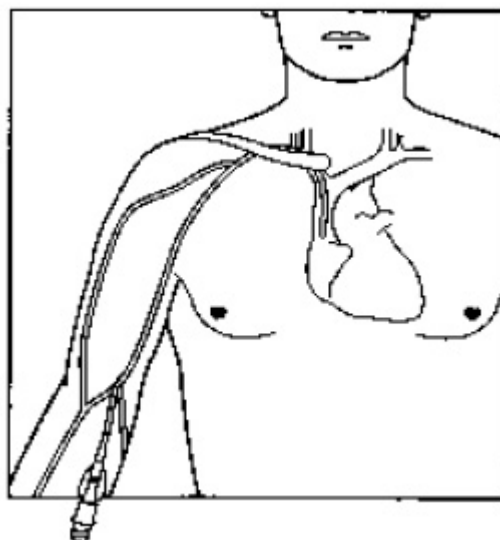
Your PICC will be put in by a specially trained nurse or doctor either in Wattlebrae Day Unit or in the Radiology (x-ray) department.

The procedure requires a sterile area but no general anaesthetic. The PICC is inserted into a suitable vein in the mid to upper arm using a local anaesthetic. It is threaded up the large vein which leads to the heart. The tip will sit in a large blood vessel close to the heart. It will be secured in place by a transparent waterproof dressing. You will then have a chest x-ray to check the catheter is in the right place.

How do I care for my PICC?

Because part of your PICC sits outside the skin it must be cared for in a sterile manner to prevent infection in or around the catheter exit site. The transparent waterproof dressing must be changed at least once a week. The nurses at the hospital will do this for you.

When the PICC is not being used there is a slight risk that it may become blocked. To avoid this, a small amount of fluid is flushed into the PICC using a syringe by nurses at the hospital. Again, this needs to be done at least once a week.



Care must also be taken with the external tubes (lumens) of the PICC. These should be well secured to the skin and can also be covered with a stretchy “sleeve” to avoid pulling or damage to the PICC lumens.

If the sterile dressing lifts or comes off before the weekly change is due it must be replaced immediately. Sterile dressings and flushes are essential and must be done weekly to prevent catheter infection and blockage.

How to prevent problems with PICC?

- Keep knives, scissors and sharp objects away from your PICC. This will avoid an accidental cut or split in the line.
- **Do not swim with your PICC in place.** There is high risk of infection.
- **Heavy lifting should be avoided.**
- **You can shower with the PICC as there is a waterproof dressing protecting the catheter. Contact the hospital if the dressing begins to lift away from the skin or you notice any fluid under the dressing.**
- Check that the injection caps or bungs on the end of the PICC lumens are never loose.
- Keep the PICC well protected from pulling by taping it to the skin and keeping it covered with a protective sleeve.
- Make sure the PICC has a sterile dressing and flush every week. Check your appointments to ensure they are booked in.

Report any signs of infection

These may include

- Redness, swelling, tenderness or oozing at the PICC site
- Swollen, painful arm
- Elevated temperature, fever

What to do in an Emergency

If catheter falls out

- Immediately cover with sterile pad and apply pressure to the exit site.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately.

If catheter starts leaking

- Fold gauze in half and place around catheter between the leak and the exit site. Clamp the catheter using the green clamp and hold or tape it into position.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately.

If the Connectors come off

- If the PICC has a clamp attached, make sure the clamp is closed and attach the spare connector in your Emergency pack.
- If the PICC does not have a clamp, fold gauze in half and place around catheter. Clamp the catheter using the green clamp and hold or tape it into position.
- Contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately

Checklist

If any of the following occur contact your relevant Cancer Care Outpatient Department during business hours or after hours contact your local Emergency Department for further instructions immediately:

- Increased redness at the exit site
- Discharge from the exit site
- Pain at or near the exit site
- Swelling at or near the exit site
- Movement of the catheter in or out of the exit site
- Clamps open
- Loss of the bung from the end of the catheter
- Any hole, break or cut to the catheter

Contact Information

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Oncology Day Therapy Unit

Phone (07) 3646 8749

Business Hours:

7am – 6pm Monday – Friday

8am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday

North Lakes Cancer Care Services

Phone (07) 3646 1905

Business Hours:

8am – 5pm Monday – Thursday

Oncology Procedure Unit

Phone (07) 3646 1905

Business Hours:

7:30am – 5pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Contact Ward 5C or 6AS through the RBWH main switchboard

Phone: (07) 3646 8111

The Prince Charles Hospital Day Oncology Unit

Phone (07) 31395730

Business Hours:

8am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

TPCH Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 31394000

Redcliffe Day Oncology Unit

Phone (07) 38837196

Business Hours:

7:30am – 5:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Redcliffe Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 38837777

Kilcoy Hospital

Phone (07) 54338663

Business Hours:

8am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday

After Hours

Kilcoy Main Switchboard

Phone: (07) 54224411

It is important to note that this is only a reference. The best source of information is still your Primary Health Care Provider.

References

Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention Preventing intravascular device-related blood stream infections: recommended practices for the insertion and management of tunnelled central venous catheters 2007

Gillies, D. O'Riordan, L. Carr, D. Frost, J. Gunning, R. O'Brien, I. Gauze and tape and transparent polyurethane dressings for central venous catheters (Review) The Cochrane Library 2005, Issue 2

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Guidelines for the Prevention of Intravascular Catheter-Related Infections Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2002.

Dougherty L. (2006), Central Venous Access Devices Care and Management. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Sited in Cancer Nurses Society of Australia, Central Venous Access Devices: Principles for Nursing Practice and Education 2007

Hamilton H. (2006), Complications associated with venous access devices: part two. Nursing Standard, Vol 20, No 27, pp.59-66. Sited in Cancer Nurses Society of Australia, Central

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I-care Intravascular device management – December 2015 Available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/infection-prevention/intravascular-device-management>