

What you need to know about your PICC

Peripherally inserted central catheter.



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What is a PICC Line Used For?

PICC stands for peripherally inserted central catheter. It is inserted into your child's arm just above the elbow. The PICC may be used to:

- give long term medications without irritation to the veins
- give nutritional support
- take blood samples as needed

By placing a PICC in your child's arm, he will not have to go through the discomfort of having to start an intravenous line (IV) whenever he needs medications. This means less needle pokes for your child.

The PICC has several parts

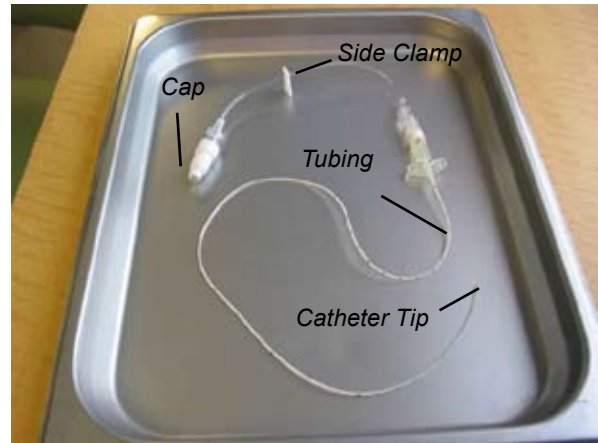
The Catheter: A thin flexible tube. The tube may have one or two channels (lumens). There are small black markings every centimeter with very small numbers every 5 centimeters starting at 0.

The tip of the catheter is inserted in a blood vessel call the superior vena cava (SVC) which leads to the heart.

The Dressing: The catheter has wings that attach to the **Stat lock**, a white sticker shaped like a triangle that secures the catheter in place. A clear dressing is placed overtop.

The Tubing: Extension tubing is connected to the hub of the catheter. There is a slide clamp along the extension tubing.

The Cap: A Max plus cap is placed at the end of the extension tubing.



When in place the PICC line looks like this:



Important Information About Your Child's PICC

Your IV nurse will fill out this information:

Patient name _____
PICC inserted by _____
Date inserted _____
PICC size _____
Length of catheter _____
Length of catheter left out under dressing _____
Weekly dressing change on _____

*Developed by the health professionals in the IV Home Therapy Program
with assistance from the Department of Learning and Development.*

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What Things Do I Need to Watch Out For?

Here are some of the more common problems that may happen with a PICC.

Dressing lifting off

A little bit of bleeding at the area where the PICC enters the skin is normal for the first few days. Your nurse will change the dressing:

- a few days after the PICC was inserted
- every week
- when wet or dirty

What to do:

Keep the dressing clean and dry. You will need to cover the dressing for bathing – a plastic bag secured with waterproof tape works well.

- Place a new dressing overtop of the dressing that is lifting off. Your nurse will show you how to do this.
- Your child should not do any strenuous activities but encourage her to keep moving her arm gently.
- No swimming or contact sports!

Movement of the catheter exit mark (Catheter Migration)

You will need to check the exit marking daily to ensure the catheter does not move in or out of your child's body. Here is a table to help you learn what to look out for and what to do.

- Check the exit mark daily.
- Call your nurse if the exit mark has changed by more than one centimeter.
- Ensure the dressing is keeping the line secure.

Catheter moves inside

What it looks like:

The catheter will show less markings than when it was inserted.

What to do:

Contact the IV nurse. Your nurse will need to change the dressing and will gently pull back on the catheter to the proper marking.

Catheter moves outside

What it looks like:

The catheter will show more markings than when it was inserted.

What to do:

Contact the IV nurse. Your nurse will need to check the placement. Do not reinsert the catheter.

Blocked Catheter

Sometimes a PICC can get blocked. It is a very small tube, so there are several reasons why it could become blocked.

These are signs that mean the catheter could be blocked:

- Resistance in the catheter during flushing.
- Pump shows high pressure reading HIP on the Cadd pump (if using)

What to do:

- You will be taught to heparin flush your catheter prior to going home
- Do not use extra pressure when flushing
- Contact your nurse or doctor.

Infections

These are signs of infection:

- Fever
- Chills
- Your child may be lethargic (tired) and irritable.
- Redness, swelling, heat, pain or oozing at the exit site

What to do:

- Call your doctor or nurse, your child will need treatment

To avoid the risk of infection, wash your hands before beginning any procedure. Maintain sterility while performing procedures for your PICC line. Your nurse will teach you this.

