

What you need to know about your PICC

(Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter)



Home IV Therapy Program

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What is a PICC?

A **Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)** is a soft tube. The PICC enters a vein in your child's arm. The tube floats in the vein. The end sits in the large vein close to the heart. The blood flows quickly in this vein. It is a good place for IV (intravenous) fluids and medicine to enter the blood.

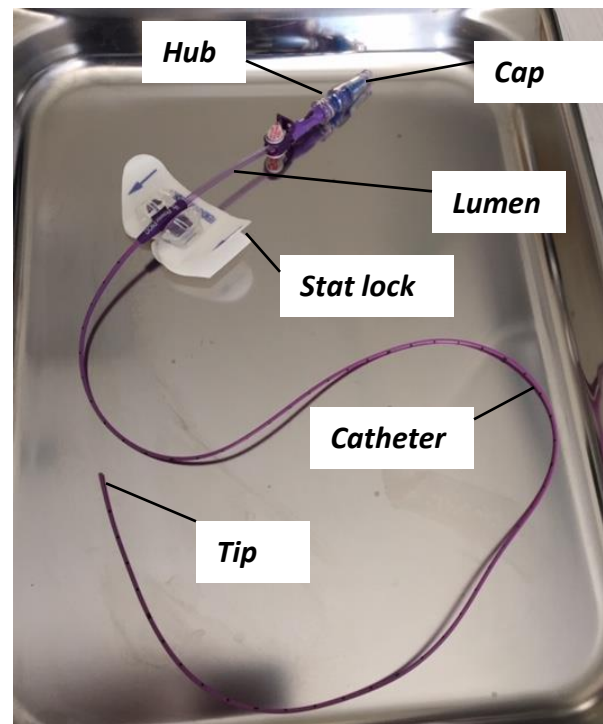
Health care workers can use a PICC to give your child medicine or other IV fluids. They can also use a PICC to take blood samples. This means fewer needle pokes for your child.

The parts of a PICC

- The **catheter** is a thin, flexible tube. There is a small black mark every centimeter. There are numbers every 5 centimeters, starting at 0.
- The catheter can have one or two channels, called **lumens**.
- A **cap** covers the end of each lumen.
- The **clamp** stops fluid from going into or out of the catheter.
- The **Stat lock** is a white sticker with 'doors.' This holds the catheter in place.
- A clear **dressing** covers the exit site. The exit mark will be visible

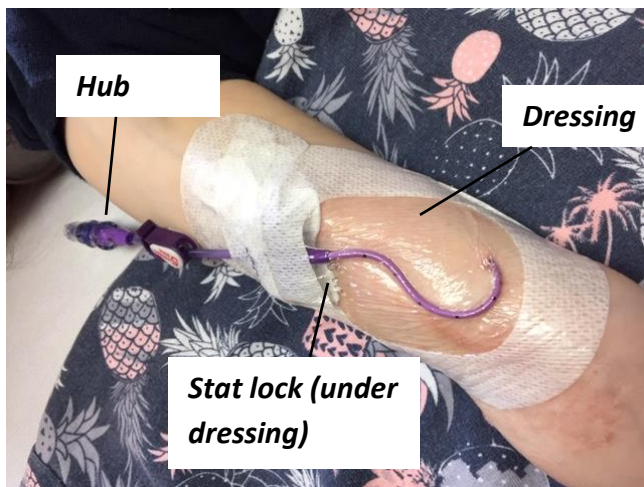
under the dressing and checked frequently.

- The **tip of the catheter** sits in the blood vessel called the Superior Vena Cava (SVC).



Your nurse will change the dressing:

- A week after the PICC is put in
- Once a week
- When wet, dirty or falling off



A PICC line in place

Caring for your child's PICC

Before you go home, your nurse will teach you how to:

- Manage emergencies
- Check the exit mark
- Cover a peeling dressing or bandage with a new dressing
- Keep the inside of the PICC clean and sterile
- Clamp the catheter
- Check that the tubing and cap are closed 'finger tight'
- Secure the tubing to your child's clothing. Do not let your child pull on the tubing.

Your nurse may also teach you how to:

- Heparin flush your child's catheter
- Change the PICC dressing and cap.

When you get home

Get moving. Encourage your child to move their arm gently. Your doctor will tell you which activities will be safest. Your child should not swim, or do contact sports like football.

Stop infections.

- Wash your hands before touching the PICC.
- Make sure the dressing is secure.
- Keep the inside of the PICC sterile. Follow the instructions from your nurse.
- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Keep the dressing dry in the bath or shower. Before a bath or shower, cover the dressing. You can use a plastic bag, plastic wrap, or press and seal wrap. Seal the plastic around the dressing with waterproof tape.

What should I watch out for?

Dressing lifting off

- **What to do:** Put a dressing on top of the dressing that is lifting off. If part of the PICC line has come out of the dressing it will need to be changed as soon as possible.
- **How to avoid it:** Keep the dressing clean and dry. A little bleeding at the exit site is normal for the first few days. You may see a brown powder that prevents bleeding.

Catheter exit mark changes (Catheter migration)

- **What to do:**

- Check the exit mark on your child's catheter every day.
- If the exit mark has changed by more than one centimeter in or out, **call your IV nurse. Do not try to fix the catheter.**
- **How to avoid it:** Check that the dressing and Stat lock hold the PICC in place.

Loose or cracked cap

- **You may notice:**
 - The cap is loose or off.
 - Fluid or blood leaking from the cap.
- **What to do:**
 - Scrub the connection with an alcohol swab.
 - Change the cap. **Do not reuse the old one.**

Blocked catheter

A PICC is a small tube, and can get blocked.

- **You may notice:**
 - It is more difficult to flush the catheter. Or, you are unable to flush the catheter. **Do not use force.**
 - If you use a pump, it may show high pressure.
- **What to do:**
 - Call your child's doctor **right away. You may need to come to the hospital.**

Infection

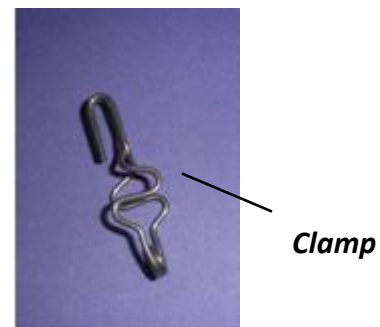
- **You may notice:**
 - A fever of over 38 degrees Celsius.

- Chills.
- Redness, swelling, heat, pain or oozing at the exit site.
- Your child is grouchy or tired.
- **What to do:**
 - Take your child to Emergency. A blood sample from the PICC line will be taken to check for infection.

Break in the catheter

- **What to do:**
 - **Clamp** the catheter between the exit site and the break.
 - **Cover** the break with sterile gauze.
 - **Call** your child's doctor **right away.** Then, call the IV Team.

Always keep a clamp with you.



Catheter comes out

- **What to do:**
 - Put pressure at the exit site. Use gauze.
 - Check the catheter length. Has the full catheter come out?
 - Keep the catheter to show your care team.

- Call your child's doctor **right away**. Then, call the IV Team.

In time, your child may outgrow their PICC. As your child grows, it is important to have an x-ray. This will check PICC placement.

About your child's PICC

PICC inserted by

Date inserted

PICC size

Total length of catheter

Length of catheter left out under dressing

Weekly dressing change on

Who to call?

If your child's catheter is blocked, broken, or comes out:

1. **Call your child's doctor.** If they are not working, talk to the doctor on call.

2. Call the IV Team.

- **To reach us right away**, call 604-875-2445. Say 'IV Team' when you hear the prompt. All IV Team members on duty will hear your call, and will answer as soon as possible. If there is no answer right away, leave a message.
 - IV Team hours:
 - Mon – Fri, 7am – 10 pm
 - Weekends, 8 am – 8 pm
 - Holidays, 8 am – 8 pm
- **To page us**, call 604 875-4200, pager 01118. Enter your phone number when you hear the prompt.
- **To leave a private voice message**, call 604 875-2345, local 1982.

If your child's catheter has moved (migrated), call the IV team.

If you have non-urgent questions about your child's catheter, call the IV team 604 875-2345, local 1982.

To send us a picture, email the IV Team at ivtherapy@cw.bc.ca.

For dressing changes and regular blood sample appointments, call the Medical Day Unit at 604-875-3680.

To reach the Emergency Department, call 605-875-2045.

It's good to ask!