

# Cuffed Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter: PICC

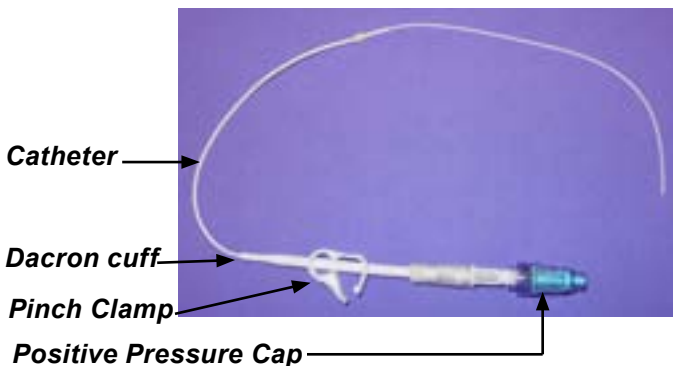
## What.. Why.. How..

### What is it?

The parts of a cuffed peripherally inserted central catheter or cuffed PICC are:

- A thin flexible tube called a catheter.
- A cuff that rests just under the skin where the catheter leaves the body. This is called a dacron cuff. Body tissue grows around the cuff and helps hold the catheter in place.
- The tip of the catheter lies in the vein at the entrance to the right side of the heart.
- The clamp that stops fluid flowing in and out of the catheter is called a pinch clamp.
- Attached to the end of the catheter outside the body is a positive pressure cap. It makes sure blood does not collect on the catheter tip inside the body.

*Cuffed Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter*

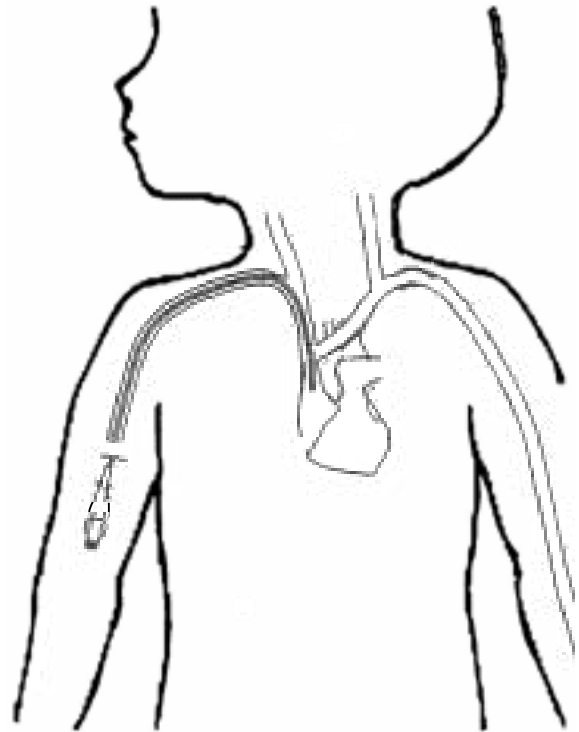


### Why does my child need it?

Your doctor recommends a cuffed PICC if your child needs;

- IV medications that may irritate small veins
- help to get the nutrition he or she needs over a long period of time
- to have blood samples taken often

- a secure IV catheter if he or she has had a “non-cuffed” PICC line that has been difficult to maintain



*Cuffed PICC*

### How is it put in?

Your child goes to the radiology department to have the Cuffed PICC put in. Special equipment is used to make sure the catheter tip is in the right place.

- A small needle put into a vein in the arm.
- The catheter is then put in. There may be some bleeding where the catheter comes out from the skin. This is because there needs to be a small opening of the skin to put the catheter through.
- The cuff of the catheter lies under the skin just before the catheter comes out from the body. (a line drawing maybe better here) The place where the catheter comes out from the body is called the exit site.

- A clear bandage or dressing is put on with a coiling of the catheter to make sure it stays in place.

*Coil under clear bandage*



- It takes 4 to 8 weeks for body tissue to grow around the cuff.

## What Things do I need to watch out for?

### Bandage or Dressing lifting off

#### What to do:

- Put a new dressing overtop of the dressing that is lifting off. Your nurse will show you how to do this.

### Your nurse changes the dressing:

- a few days after the PICC was put in
- every week
- when wet or dirty
- when the coil has slipped out

#### How to avoid it.

- Keep the dressing clean and dry. A little bit of bleeding at the area where the PICC enters the skin is normal for the first few days.
- Cover the dressing for bathing. A plastic bag secured with waterproof tape works well.
- Encourage your child to keep moving the arm gently. Talk to your doctor about your child's usual activities. Your child should not swim or do contact sports such as football.

## Blocked Catheter

Sometimes a PICC can get blocked. It is a very small tube.

### How will I know it is blocked?

You may notice:

- it is more difficult to flush the catheter
- if you are using a pump it shows high pressure
- blood samples cannot be taken

#### What to do.

A medication may be used to unblock the catheter. If you think this is needed call your doctor or nurse. You will be taught to heparin flush your catheter prior to going home. Do not use extra pressure when flushing.

## Infections

#### What to do.

- If your child has a fever over 38 degrees Celsius she or he needs to be seen by a doctor or to go to emergency. They will need to have a blood sample taken.
- Take your child to the doctor if you see any of these signs of infection:
- fever and chills
- your child is more tired and grouchy
- there is redness, swelling, heat, pain or oozing at the exit site

#### How to avoid it.

- Wash your hands before doing anything with the PICC line to help stop infections.
- Follow the steps the nurse taught you so things are kept sterile with the PICC line. Follow these steps every time.

### Loose, cracked or disconnected tubing or cap

#### Look for:

- The cap is loose or off.
- Fluid or blood is leaking out of the cap.

**What to do:**

- Scrub the connection with alcohol swab and change the tubing or cap. Do not reuse the old one

**How to avoid it**

- Check the tubing and cap connections are “finger tight”

**There is a break in the catheter**

**What to do**

**Clamp, Cover, Call**

- Clamp the catheter between the break and the exit site right away. Always carry a clamp with you.
- Cover the break with a sterile gauze.
- Call the IV team to fix the line.

**How to avoid it**

- Make sure the dressing stays in place.
- Cover the PICC dressing with cloth tubing.
- Do not let your child pull on the tubing.

**The catheter has come out**

**What to do**

- Using a gauze, put pressure at the exit site.
- Check the catheter length to make sure all of the catheter has come out. The total length of the catheter it is given at the end of this pamphlet.
- Call your nurse or doctor.

**How to avoid it:**

- Make sure the dressing stays in place.
- Pin the tubing to your child’s clothing. Your nurse will show you this.



**Important Phone Numbers**

BC Children’s Hospital 604 875-2345

IV Therapy local 7635

IV therapy pagers 604 875-4200 01118 or 01181  
- Wait for the prompt and then enter your phone number

Medical Day Unit 604 875-3680

Emergency Department 604 875-2045

BCCH Hospital paging 604 875-2161

Community Health Nurse \_\_\_\_\_

Important Information about Your Child’s PICC  
Your IV nurse will fill out this information:

Patient name  
\_\_\_\_\_

PICC inserted by  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date inserted  
\_\_\_\_\_

PICC size  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total length of catheter  
\_\_\_\_\_

Weekly dressing change on  
\_\_\_\_\_

**It's good to ask!**

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