

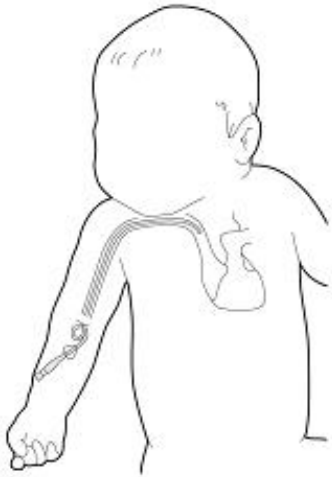


A Parent's Information Guide:

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) in the NICU

What is a PICC?

Your baby's health care team is recommending a type of intravenous (IV) line, called a PICC, to give your baby fluids. The PICC is a long, thin and flexible tube



called a catheter that is inserted into a vein in your baby's arm, foot, leg or scalp. The tube is long enough to reach one of the major veins leading to the heart. It is commonly used to give fluids to babies in the NICU.

As with any procedure, there are potential complications and benefits we want you to be aware of and understand.

Why does a PICC benefit my baby?

- ▶ Takes the place of multiple IV needles.
- ▶ Lasts longer than an IV.
- ▶ Less pain and less needle pokes.
- ▶ Safely delivers the medication to your baby.
- ▶ Decreases the risk of medication damaging your baby's veins or leaking into your baby's tissue.
- ▶ Can be inserted at the bedside.
- ▶ Easily removed by PICC nurse or doctor when no longer needed.

How will my baby get a PICC?

A trained PICC nurse or doctor will insert the PICC into your baby's arm, foot, leg or scalp at your baby's bedside.

After the PICC is inserted, an x-ray is taken to make sure it is in the right place.

Ask your doctor how your baby will be kept comfortable during the procedure.

Your baby may bleed where the PICC was inserted. The PICC nurse or doctor may put pressure on this area to help stop the bleeding or the bleeding may stop on its own within the first 24 hours that your baby has the PICC. Your baby may have bruising in this area that will heal on its own.

The PICC nurse or doctor will place a special dressing over the PICC to help it stay in place. Your nurse checks it regularly and will ask the PICC nurse or doctor to change it if it is not staying in place.

Your baby is monitored carefully for any complications that may arise by the bedside nurse.

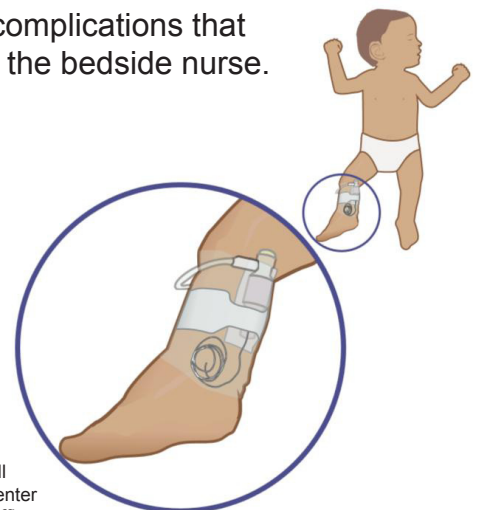


Image used with permission. © McGill University Health Center Patient Education Office

What are the possible complications?

- ▶ **Infection of the PICC line:** Care is taken to prevent infections. If your baby gets an infection, the PICC may need to be removed and your baby may need antibiotics.
- ▶ **Movement of the PICC line:** The PICC line can move out of its proper position after it has been inserted. This can occur when your baby moves their arm or leg. An x-ray may be needed to check the position of the PICC line. The PICC nurse or doctor may try to move the PICC line into a proper position, but if they can't, it may be removed.
- ▶ **Irritation of the vein (phlebitis):** The flexible tube may cause some redness and tenderness along your baby's vein for the first 2 to 3 days after insertion. The Nurse may apply warm packs to reduce this irritation. If the irritation does not go away, the PICC may be removed.
- ▶ **Leakage of fluid into surround tissue (infiltration):** The bedside nurse will check your baby for any swelling at the location of the PICC tip; if this occurs the PICC may be removed.

Note: All the above can occur with IVs.

Other possible complications

- ▶ **Air entering the IV tubing (air embolism):** Air bubbles may occur when a syringe or tubing is connected or disconnected. IV pumps are set to alert the nurse if there are air bubbles in the IV tubing.
- ▶ **Clotted PICC tube:** Special solutions are run to keep the small IV tubing from clotting. If the PICC becomes clotted, it will need to be removed.

What are the Rare Complications?

- ▶ **Changes to heart rhythm:** The location of the PICC tip may cause a change to your baby's heart rhythm if it drifts into the heart. The PICC nurse or doctor carefully documents the catheter measurements so that we can check that the catheter has stayed in place after x-rays are done. If there are any changes to the baby's vital signs an x-ray is done to check that the catheter tip is has not moved. If it has moved, the PICC will be adjusted or removed.
- ▶ **Pleural/Pericardial effusion and tamponade:** This is when the PICC leaks fluid into the sac that surrounds the heart (pericardial) or lungs (pleural). Fluid in this space can squeeze on the heart or heart or lungs. Staff monitor for this and will remove the PICC if this complication occurs.

Do You have More Questions about PICCs?

Contact:

Your Bedside Nurse

Your NICU Doctor

Specially Trained PICC Team Nurse or Doctor