

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Registered Nurse at 705-325-2201 ext: 3497 Monday-Friday 0800-1600hrs. If any urgent concerns go to the Emergency Department

What Is A PICC Line?

A peripherally inserted central catheter (a PICC or PICC line) is a tube that is placed in a large vein in the upper arm area. It is threaded through the vein to rest above the right atrium of the heart. The other end of the catheter stays outside the body. A PICC line can be single or double lumen depending on treatment.

Why Do I Need a PICC Line?

Having a PICC means you don't have to have a needle put into your arm each time you need IV therapy. Your PICC can be used for:

- fluids
- medicines, like chemotherapy and antibiotics
- a blood transfusion
- drawing blood samples
- IV nutrient (food) – this is called Parenteral Nutrition
- Depending on the type of PICC you have, your PICC can also be used to inject a special dye during a CT scan or MRI test (special kind of x-ray).

How Is The Procedure Done?

Before:

Your doctor will arrange for bloodwork prior to the procedure. Your doctor will also ask you to **stop any blood thinners** you take. Talk to your doctor about which medications need to be stopped prior to the procedure, for how long, and when you can safely start them again. You may eat or drink prior to the procedure. You may take any of your usual medications prior to the procedure.

During:

Your PICC will be put in at the Interventional Radiology Department in Diagnostic Imaging.

- You will need to change into a hospital gown for the procedure. But you may wear whatever you wish below the waist.
- A medical radiation technologist will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you have.
- You are taken into the procedure room and moved onto the table. You will lie on your back and will be awake while the PICC is put in. Getting the PICC put in usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes.
- This is an aseptic procedure, and as such your arm will be cleaned using a hospital-approved cleansing agent, and sterile drapes applied.
- A specially trained technologist or radiologist will inject a medicine into a vein above the bend in your arm, called Lidocaine. This freezes the area where the PICC goes in. This should be the only pain or discomfort during the procedure. PICC lines are always inserted in the upper arm and above the elbow so that bending your arm is not affected.

- The technologist inserts the PICC and makes sure it is put in and working properly by using ultrasound and XRAYs.
- A StatLock is used to hold the PICC in place near the exit site. The exit site is then covered with a clear bandage to prevent infection. A gauze may be put underneath the clear bandage if there is bleeding.

After:

You can expect a phone call from Home Care within 24 hours of your PICC insertion. They will arrange after care of your PICC and dressing changes. Talk to your doctor about restarting any medications you stopped.

- Spend the rest of the day resting at home. Resume a normal diet. You may resume light activities after 24 hours.
- Avoid putting pressure on the incision areas, such as wearing suspenders or a tight bra for the first 1 or 2 days.
- Avoid lifting anything heavier than 4.5 kilograms (10 pounds) for the first week after your PICC line is put in place.

Your Home Care nurse will review with you when/how to bathe, basic wound care, activities you can do with a PICC, and any restrictions. You will not require any follow-up appointments with Diagnostic Imaging Interventional Radiology.

What To Watch For:

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| • Severe pain at insertion site | • Fever (more than 100°F / 38°C) |
| • Chills | • Excessive bleeding and/or bloody dressing |
| • Feeling unusually faint or light headed | • Trouble breathing or shortness of breath |
| • Swelling of the arm on the side where the PICC was inserted | • Redness, excessive swelling, or discharge from insertion site |

If you experience any of the above problems then call your doctor, Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000), or go to your nearest Emergency Department. Take this sheet with you.

Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition.