

# Caring For Your PICC



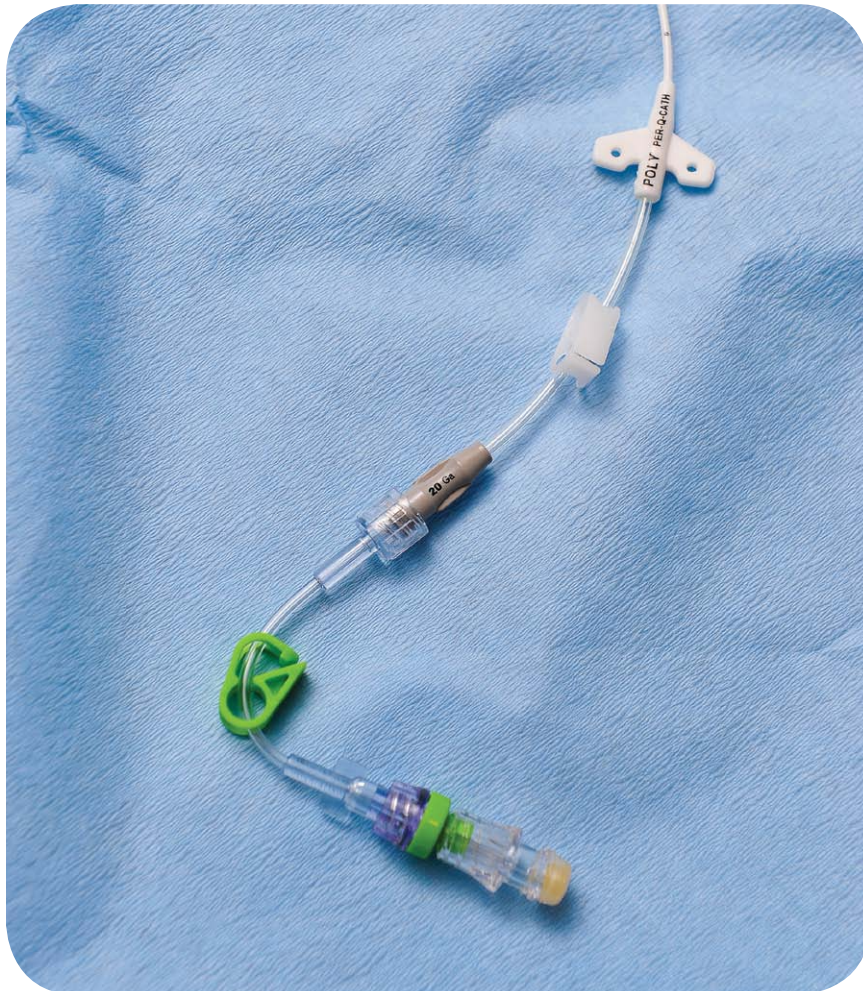
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# About Your Child's PICC

A peripherally (per-IF-er-ully) inserted central catheter, also called a PICC line, is a tube placed inside a vein. Usually a vein in the arm is used. A vein in the leg may also be used. The tube is long, skinny and made of soft, flexible plastic.

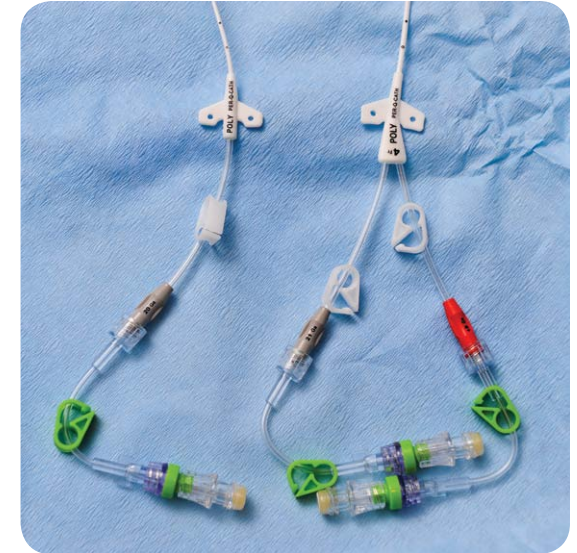
The tube is long enough to reach the large vein that enters the heart. This vein is called the superior vena cava (SVC). The tip of the PICC line is positioned in this vein near the heart.



## Why does my child need a PICC?

A PICC line is used when your child may need intravenous (IV) treatment for a long time. The time is usually longer than six days. Treatment may include IV nutrition, chemotherapy or IV medications. You may

also have blood taken through the PICC for tests. This prevents the need for many needle sticks. Your child may have a PICC line during his hospital stay only, or he may go home with a PICC line in place.



### Whether in the hospital or at home, cleanliness is a key factor

in lowering chances of infection. It is very important to wash your hands and have a clean work area. Wash your hands for 15 seconds (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before handling the PICC line. This is very important. Second, have a clean work area and wear gloves.

Your child should bathe regularly and shampoo his hair to prevent infection. Remember to cover the PICC line with plastic before showering or bathing. Please do not let the PICC go under water.

# Care of My Child's Catheter

Not everything about PICC lines will be covered in this booklet. Therefore, each time a nurse changes the dressing or gives a medicine, please watch closely and ask questions.

When your child is ready to go home with the PICC line, your home care agency will continue to help you in your care at home.

If your child goes home with a PICC line, your home care agency will provide the following services:

- ▶ Supplies for the PICC
- ▶ Dressing change and maintenance
- ▶ Instruction in the following:
  - Flushing techniques
  - Signs and symptoms of complications and actions to be taken



**The following information** is a guideline for you to follow. The procedures described on the next pages may be altered by your physician or nurse to address your child's individual needs.

## Dressing Care



The home care nurse will come to your home to make sure there are no signs of infection. The nurse will change the injection cap, extension and dressing once a week. The dressing and cap change is a sterile procedure to be done by your home care nurse.

If the dressing becomes loose, secure the edges with tape and call your home health nurse immediately for a dressing-change visit.

## Flushing your child's PICC

Flushing the catheter assures that the catheter remains clear. If the catheter is not being used regularly, it can become blocked with blood. The catheter is flushed with saline (salt solution) then filled with a medicine called Heparin. Heparin keeps the blood from clotting in the catheter. You will be taught how to flush the catheter. The catheter should be flushed at least every 24 hours.

### To flush the catheter:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 15 seconds (or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer). Dry with a paper towel or clean cloth. Put on gloves.



2. Scrub the rubber cap of the catheter with alcohol prep for 15 seconds.

3. Insert the syringe into the rubber cap, unclamp the catheter, then inject the saline/heparin flush slowly.

**DO NOT FORCE THE FLUSH IF YOU CANNOT EASILY PUSH IT IN. CALL YOUR HOME HEALTH NURSE IF UNABLE TO FLUSH.**

4. Clamp tubing while flushing the last 1ml of Heparin. This is positive-pressure flushing and will keep blood from backing up into your PICC.
5. Remove the syringe.
6. Repeat this flush with each rubber cap, if there is more than one.

**Your child's Heparin dose should be \_\_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_\_ hours.**

## Tips

› Everyone with a PICC should have a “Go Bag” that contains the following:

- Adhesive bandages
- Chlorhexidine wipes
- Sterile gauze and tape
- Injection cap
- Pre-filled Heparin and saline syringes

Take this emergency kit with you everywhere you go. Ask your home health provider for these supplies.

- › Do not swim with the PICC.
- › Cover the PICC with protective plastic covering when bathing or showering.
- › Care should be taken to protect the site if you are involved in contact sports, e.g. soccer or basketball.
- › Your doctor should approve these activities before you participate.
- › Do not use pins or scissors near the PICC line.
- › Use netting or a sock with the toe cut out to cover PICC lines.
- › Do not scratch or pull at PICC dressing.

Problem	Possible Cause	What To Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever, Chills</li> <li>• Tenderness, redness, or pus at catheter site</li> <li>• Swollen arm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your child's temperature.</li> <li>• Call the doctor right away.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trouble flushing the PICC</li> <li>• Unable to give medicines or fluid into catheter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catheter may be clamped</li> <li>• Catheter or tubing may be kinked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclamp it.</li> <li>• Remove the kink.</li> <li>• If the catheter is not kinked or clamped, do not force the solution into the tube. Call the home care nurse to report the problem.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluid leaking from the catheter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injection cap not screwed on securely</li> <li>• A hole in the catheter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tighten the injection cap.</li> <li>• If you see a leak in the line, clamp it (or fold it over and pinch it) between the damaged area and the skin and call your home care nurse, clinic, or emergency room right away.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin redness where the tape was</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitivity to tape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nurse may need to change the type of dressing or tape used.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICC line accidentally comes out completely</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a sterile gauze pad on the site and press firmly until the bleeding has stopped (2 to 5 minutes).</li> <li>• After the bleeding has stopped, apply a bandage snugly.</li> <li>• Save the PICC line and call your doctor or home care nurse.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICC line comes partially out</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanse site with chlorhexadine, if available, and apply adhesive bandage.</li> <li>• Call your doctor or home care nurse immediately.</li> <li>• Do not give medicine through line until OK'd by your doctor.</li> </ul>

## When to Call Your Doctor

- › Redness, swelling, warmth or pain at the insertion site
- › Drainage or pus from the insertion site
- › Fever above 100.4°F or shaking chills
- › Shortness of breath or any chest pain
- › Flu-like symptoms
- › Pain in ear or PICC arm
- › PICC pulled out partially or completely
- › Bleeding at PICC site

## When to Call Your Home Care Nurse

- › Dressing is loose, wet or soiled
- › PICC hard to flush or unable to flush at all
- › Tubing that splits or leaks
- › PICC pulled out partially or completely
- › Cap is bloody or dirty

## Glossary

### Antibiotic

Medicine to treat an infection.

### Catheter

A soft tube that is inserted into the body. In this case, the soft tube is a PICC catheter that is inserted into a vein in the arm. Various drugs and fluids are delivered through the catheter, instead of directly into the vein.

### Clamp

Device used to pinch off extension tubing.

### Dressing/Tegaderm

Clear tape covering your child's PICC to help keep it clean and dry.

### Extension

Tubing attached to the catheter.

### Exit Site/Catheter Site

Where the catheter comes out of your body. It is very important to keep this area very clean, or sterile, to prevent infections. This is why you keep the area dry and covered with a dressing.

### Heparin/Heparin Flush

A drug used to prevent the formation of blood clot inside the PICC catheter. It is injected until it fills the entire catheter lumen.

### Hub

A plastic adapter, located on the catheter. The injection cap is screwed onto the hub of the catheter.





# CATHETER INFORMATION

Catheter Brand \_\_\_\_\_

Catheter Size \_\_\_\_\_

Catheter Length \_\_\_\_\_

Arm Circumference \_\_\_\_\_

Heparin Flush Concentration \_\_\_\_\_

Volume (Amount) of Flush \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency (How Often) of Flush \_\_\_\_\_

Dressing Change Day \_\_\_\_\_

Home Care Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Supply Company \_\_\_\_\_

Home Care Pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_