

How will I know if something is wrong with my PICC line?

Most PICC line insertions are trouble free, but please contact your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following:

- Bleeding from the insertion site.
- A temperature of >38°C, fever and chills.
- Leaking or fractured line.
- Pain and swelling of the arm, neck and chest.
- The external visible length of the PICC line is longer than when first inserted.
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- Redness and inflammation of the insertion site.

Who will look after my PICC?

This depends if you are an in patient or an outpatient. The nurses on the ward, hospital at home team, chemotherapy team or community nurses will take care of it. They will clean the site and change the fixation device and dressing. The line will also be flushed to avoid it blocking. This will be done weekly as a minimum.

How will I look after my PICC line?

You can bathe/shower with a waterproof dressing in place. We ask that you try not to soak the dressing or allow the line to sit in water.

Try to avoid vigorous exercises, golfing or tennis and this can dislodge the PICC line.

If the PICC should partly fall out, fix it in place with some tape and seek help immediately.

If the PICC has completely fallen out press on the hole in your skin for a few minutes. Then apply a small sterile dressing. If it continues to bleed apply pressure for a further three to five minutes.

Seek help and keep the PICC for inspection.

Any questions or concerns

Please contact:

Ambulatory Care Unit between the hours of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday on
01851 708147 or 762062
Outside these hours contact NHS24 on 111.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website feedback section at:
www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk or share your story at:
www.careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.

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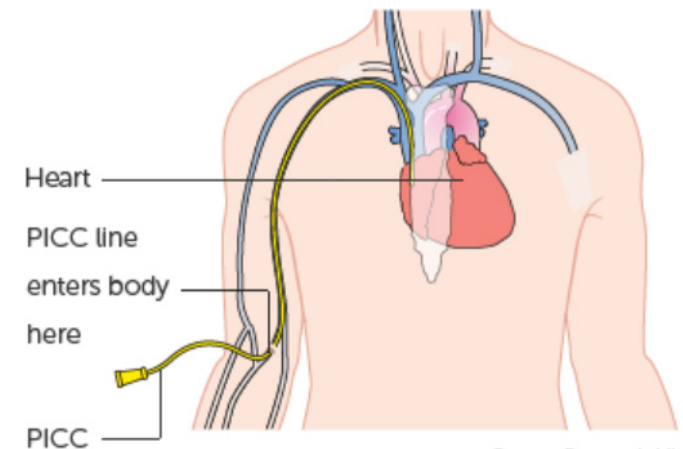
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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters



This information leaflet aims to help answer some of the questions you may have about your peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC line). This information leaflet will explain why you need a PICC line, what to do before you have the procedure and how to care for it if you are to go home with a PICC line.

What is a PICC line?

PICC stands for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. It's a type of central line.

A PICC line is a long narrow flexible tube inserted into one of the veins of the arm.

The line goes into a vein in your arm, under local anaesthetic. A doctor or nurse can put it in during an outpatient appointment. The line runs up the vein inside your arm and ends up in a large vein in your chest. It can be left in for weeks or months.



Why do I need a PICC Line?

A PICC line can be used to allow medication, fluids, nutrition or antibiotics to be given intravenously (administered directly to a vein).

In addition, it can be used to take blood samples which reduces the need for multiple needle punctures in the arm.

What are the risks?

Infection: There is a small risk of infection. This can happen anytime while the PICC line is in place.

Thrombosis: This can form around the line. Patients who have blood clots often report having painful and swollen arms.

Malposition: In some cases, the tip of the line may not be in the correct position. A chest x-ray is required to check position and the nurse specialist or doctor may have to adjust the line accordingly.

Failure to insert: The veins in the arm are sometimes very small and it may not be possible to insert a PICC. If this is the case then we will discuss alternative options with you.

Phlebitis: This is inflammation of the vein. This results in a painful red swelling in the line of the vein and can be caused by movement of the catheter within the vein. The catheter can irritate the vein causing the arm to become hard and red.

Local bruising or pain at the site of insertion: This usually settles over a few days; you may require some simple pain relief such as paracetamol.

What to expect on the day

The specialist nurse or doctor will scan your arm using an ultrasound machine, this will help determine the right size and type of vein to place the PICC line.

Your arm will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and covered with a sterile drape.

The specialist nurse or doctor will inject the local anaesthetic to numb the insertion site. You should not feel any pain during the procedure. However, you will feel some pressure on the insertion site while the specialist nurse or doctor is working.

The procedure will take approximately 30 - 60 minutes.

A fixation device and clear adhesive dressing will be used to secure the line in place. A chest x-ray will be used to confirm the tip of the line is in the correct position.

After the procedure

Once the local anaesthetic wears off, you may feel some slight discomfort or ache in the arm where the PICC line was inserted. This is quite normal. There may be some bruising around the insertion site and blood on the dressing. This is nothing to worry about.

In some cases, there may be some tenderness or swelling around the insertion site. This is quite common, especially during the first week following the procedure.