

Information for patients having a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter insertion

What is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)?

- A PICC is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter,
- It is a long thin tube that is placed into a vein and threaded until the tip is in a large vein in your chest.
- The PICC may be used to give medicines and other fluids, such as nutrition and blood products, into the vein. This is called IV or intravenous.
- Unlike the sort of IV lines you may have had placed in your hand or arm, a PICC may be in your arm many weeks or months. It may also be possible to take blood samples from your PICC and to use it for other special tests.

How is the PICC placed?

- Your PICC will be placed by a doctor or a specially trained practitioner.
- This may be done in your room in the hospital, a clinic, interventional radiology unit or other locations.
- It is important that you are as comfortable as possible and that you do not move your arm during the PICC placement.
- Your arm will be cleaned, and you will be covered with special cloths to keep the area as clean as possible - this is called sterile technique. The person placing your PICC will wear a mask, gown, gloves and hat. This is to protect you and keep the area clean during the procedure.
- A numbing medicine (local anaesthetic) will be given at the place where the catheter will enter your arm. This is done through a very small needle and may sting. An ultrasound machine, or in some cases a special x-ray machine, may be used to look at your veins.
- The PICC is threaded into the vein. After the PICC is in place, a sterile dressing will be put over the insertion site (the place on your arm where the PICC enters the vein).
- An X-ray may need to be taken to make sure the PICC tip is in the correct position in a vein in your chest.

How do I care for my PICC?

- Your PICC will need to be cared for and kept clean. Care will include changing the dressing any time it becomes loose, soiled or wet and at least once per week. This may be done by a healthcare provider, by you, a family member or friend that has been taught how the dressing is changed.
- A sterile end cap will be placed on the end of the catheter. This is called the hub and it keeps the catheter closed when not being used. Certain end caps allow access to the catheter without removing it from the hub. Some PICCS have one opening (lumen) and others have two lumens. Notify your healthcare provider if your end cap(s) becomes loose, comes off or is leaking. The end caps should be changed at least once per week, or as often as your healthcare provider suggests.
- Before any medicine or fluid is given, or blood is drawn, the end cap and/or hub must be cleaned with a special cleaning solution. This is done to prevent germs from getting into your catheter. Your healthcare provider will teach you how to clean the end cap.

Should I limit my activities while I have the PICC?

- Generally, bending your arm, reaching and doing everyday activities will not harm your PICC.
- You should not lift heavy objects, or carry objects held in the bend of your arm that may put a strain on the PICC or the dressing.
- You may take a shower or bath with the PICC in place as long as you cover the PICC and dressing with plastic wrap, a plastic bag or material that will keep it from getting wet.
- You should NOT do other activities, like swimming, that may get the catheter or dressing wet. A wet dressing or catheter may put you at risk of infection.

Notify your healthcare provider or seek medical attention if you have:

- Redness, soreness or swelling at the PICC insertion site on your arm.
- Fever, chills or vomiting.
- Any problems with your catheter while caring for it.
- Difficulty giving medications or difficulty being able to draw blood.
- A catheter that becomes damaged in any way, leaks, is torn or broken.

Any questions?

If you have any further questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please telephone the Vascular Access Team between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday on 01603 286088.

If you have any questions outside of these hours, or develop any problems needing medical advice, please do the following:

- If you are an oncology patient, please call the helpline number provided to you by your Oncologist.
- If you are an outpatient, please contact your GP or attend A&E if appropriate.

Hospital Transport:	If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100
Contact details:	Telephone 01603 286088 Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm Email: radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk

If you have any comments or suggestions about this letter, please feel free to contact us.

The Trust has to submit information to national registers monitoring imaging tests and scans. All information is stored securely and confidentially. Your anonymised images may also be used for teaching and research purposes. The Trust is a teaching hospital so students may perform or observe procedures.

If you do not want your anonymised data to be submitted to national registers, or a student involved in your procedure, please speak to a member of staff when you come to your appointment. Please be reassured that this will not prejudice your care in any way.

