

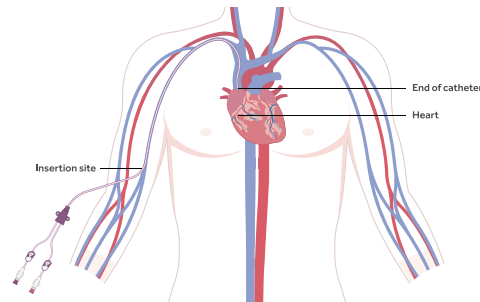
# Patient Information

## Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter

### What is a peripherally inserted central catheter?

#### **PICC:** (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter )

A peripherally inserted central catheter is a special kind of IV. It is also called a “PICC line.” With a PICC, you can get the nutrients, fluids, blood, and medicines you need directly into your body. The medical staff might be able to draw blood for lab tests through your PICC. When you have a PICC, you might also need fewer needle sticks for IVs or blood tests.



### How do I take care of a PICC?

Your nurse will provide training on how you should care for your PICC. Make sure that you understand exactly what you need to do to care for yourself. Ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

#### **You should also:**

- Be sure to keep all appointments and follow instructions provided by your nurse. Your home health nurse will assist with your PICC line care by providing weekly dressing changes. Call your nurse if the dressing is wet, loose, or dirty. Having a PICC increases your risk of infection. This is why it's so important to take care of it.
- Keep the PICC covered at all times with a dressing. Keep the dressing clean and dry.
- Be sure that the caps are secure, and that the clamps are closed, when you are not using the PICC.

### How do I flush the PICC?

Flush all of the lumens of the PICC each day with a sterile fluid. You should also flush a lumen after it is used to give medicine. This helps keep the PICC from getting blocked. Your doctor will order heparin, normal saline, or another solution for you to use when you flush the PICC.

- Gather your supplies, and place them on a clean workspace. You need alcohol wipes and a syringe filled with the fluid to flush the PICC. Your doctor or nurse will tell you the right amount of flush to use for the catheter. If you are flushing more than 1 lumen, you will need an additional set of supplies for each lumen.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Scrub the top and sides of the cap for at least 15 seconds with an alcohol wipe. Let dry. Remove the end cap from the syringe, and check for air bubbles. Slowly push the syringe plunger forward until all of the air is out of the syringe.
- Screw the syringe onto the end of the cap on the PICC.
- Unclamp the PICC (if you have a clamp), and push the fluid into the PICC. You might be told to gently pull back on the syringe until you see blood in the PICC.

#### **The doctor or nurse will tell you which method of flushing is best for the PICC you have. They might tell you to:**

- Flush slowly and steadily until the syringe is empty, then clamp (if the PICC has a clamp).
- Flush slowly until the syringe is at the 7-mL mark, then pause for a second. Next, flush slowly until the syringe is at the 4-mL mark, then pause for a second. Finally, flush slowly to the 1-mL mark. As you reach the 1-mL mark, hold pressure on the syringe and clamp the PICC before you get to the very bottom of the syringe. This example is using 10 mL of flush. The amount you give might be different.

- Remove the syringe from the PICC.
  - If your PICC does not have a clamp, or you were told not to clamp the line, remove the syringe just before the black stopper reaches the bottom of the syringe.
- Repeat these steps for each lumen of the PICC.
- Use new supplies for each lumen. Do not reuse the same syringe.
- Throw out any used swabs, wipes, or other supplies. Throw away syringes into a hard-plastic container designed for used syringes. Do not throw away syringes in the trash.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

## What else should I know?

- Avoid contact sports or rough play.
- Keep sharp objects away from the PICC.
- Avoid swimming.
- Keep the dressing covered when showering. Call your nurse to change the dressing if the dressing becomes wet, loose, or dirty.
- Make sure that the PICC is secured with special PICC holders.
- Keep the PICC clamped when the lumen is exposed to air, if the PICC has a clamp. For example, it should be clamped when connecting an IV or when changing the cap. The doctor or nurse will teach you when and how to clamp the PICC correctly.
- Check every day for signs of infection, including: redness, warmth, swelling, pain or fever.

## When should I call Pentec Health?

You have symptoms of an infection. These include a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, and redness, drainage, warmth, stinging or pain where the PICC goes into your skin.

### **Call if there are problems with the PICC, like:**

- The PICC falls out all of the way or part of the way.
- The PICC breaks, cracks, or leaks.
- You cannot get the medicine or flush solution through the PICC.
- You cannot get a blood return from the PICC.
- You have any concerns about the PICC.
- You have sudden shortness of breath or chest pain.
- You have pain, tenderness, firmness, or redness along the vein where the PICC is located.