

A Guide for Patients and Families

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

What is a PICC?

PICC is a long, thin, soft and flexible tube that is inserted into your body through a large vein, usually in the upper arm, and passes through to the larger vein near your heart. The PICC maybe single or double lumen, meaning that it comes in single or double tubes.



Why do I need a PICC?

You need long term access to the veins for one of the following:

- Antibiotics
- Chemotherapy
- Total parenteral nutrition (nutrition administered through the veins).
- Blood sampling without repeated needle pricks.



How often should a catheter be changed?

- Every 6 months.
- When the catheter is blocked or slipped out.

Where will the catheter be inserted in the hospital?
The catheter will be inserted at the Radiology Department. It takes about half an hour or less to complete the insertion.



How is a PICC inserted?

To reduce the pain of inserting the PICC, an injection of a pain killer is given to the patient before insertion.

Our healthcare professional will use ultrasound to first locate the vein in your upper arm, and then insert the PICC subsequently. After the insertion, an X-ray will be done to confirm the location of the tip of the catheter.

What else do I need to know about the PICC?

You are advised to rest in bed for 4 to 6 hours. The nurse will perform close monitoring regularly to monitor for any abnormalities. The PICC will be secured by a securement device (refer to Fig 1). A dressing will be placed over the PICC and the securement device (refer to Fig 2.). The end of the PICC is closed with a connector. The securement device, dressing and connector have to be changed every seven days or when needed.

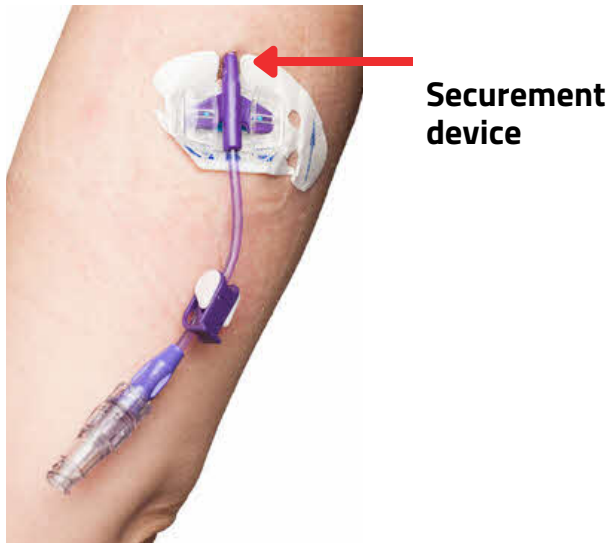


Fig 1

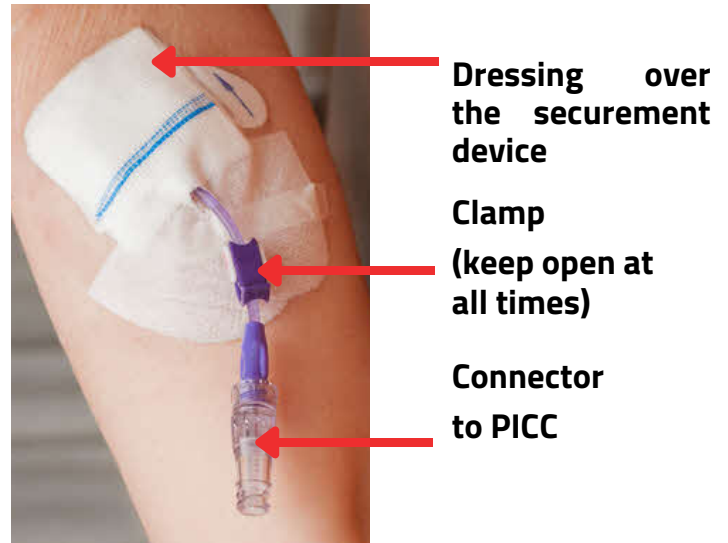


Fig 2



What can I expect after inserting the PICC?

Some bleeding like staining on the dressing may be expected over the insertion site. You may feel some pain or discomfort after insertion. **Do take the oral medicine for pain as prescribed by your doctor.**

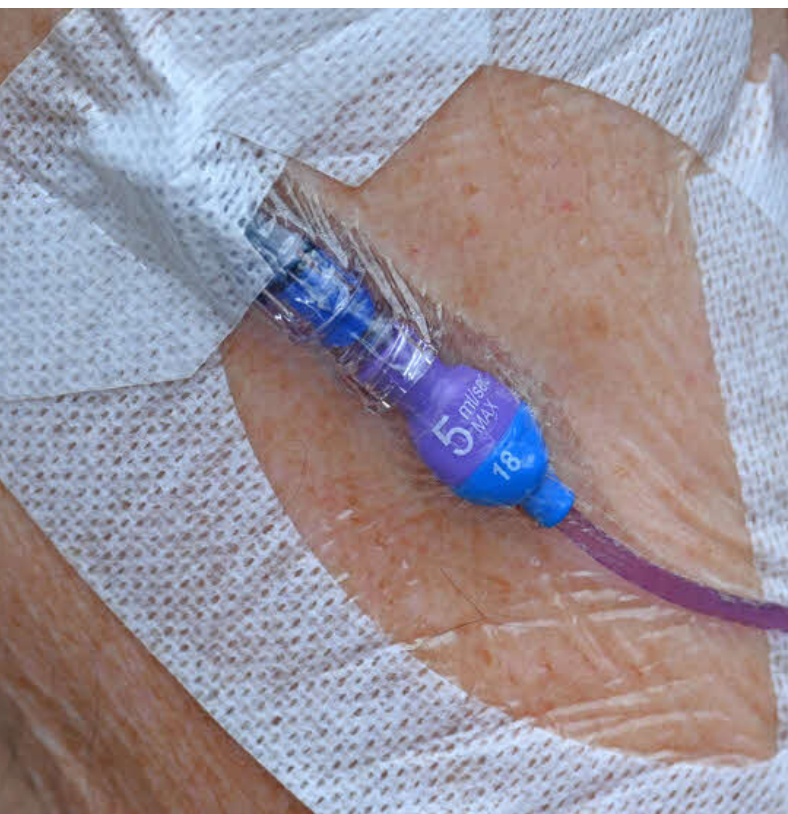
Notify the nurse immediately if you notice any of the followings:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Wet or loose dressing.
- Fever exceeding $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ or chills.
- Yellow discharge or foul smell at the insertion site.
- Swelling and pain in the upper arm or shoulder.
- Leaking of fluid from the catheter.
- Breakage or dislodgement of the tubes in any way.

How to care for your PICC line?

Do's

- Wash your hands before touching your PICC and the surrounding area.
- Keep your PICC dressing dry, clean and intact at all times.
- Cover the dressing with a waterproof material and seal the edges before shower.
- Inform the nurse if you suspect that the PICC has shifted.



Don'ts

- Lift heavy items or perform strenuous activities (e.g. swimming, playing tennis) that will strain the affected arm or cause the PICC to dislodge.
- Submerge the PICC line in water such as bathtub or swimming pool.
- Pull on the catheter.
- Scratch on or around the insertion site.
- Use scissors or sharp objects to remove tape/dressing from the catheter site.

Why do I need to visit the clinic?

- To receive your medications as prescribed by the doctor.
For blood test to determine the effectiveness and progress of the treatment.
- For weekly change of PICC securement device, dressing and connector.



How is it removed?

A trained nurse or doctor will remove the catheter for you when your treatment completes.

After removal of PICC, you should:

- **Secure the site with light pressure dressing for 1-2 hours to prevent bleeding.**
- **Apply a plaster over the site after bleeding stop.**
- **Go to the Emergency Department if you have any active bleeding over site, shortness of breath or fever.**



What should I do if my PICC comes out accidentally?

- Do not try to push the PICC back in.
- Press onto the existing site firmly with a few gauzes for at least 10 minutes.
- Use bandage to secure if necessary.
- If at hospital, inform the nurse/doctor immediately.
- If at home, proceed to the nearest hospital for medical help. (Do bring along the dislodged PICC tubing).

Do I need to stay in hospital until the PICC is removed?
Not necessary, as you can take care of the PICC at home. However, you will be given an appointment for follow-up at one of the clinics, depending on your condition type.

You may contact Nurses at:

- Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotics Therapy (OPAT)
- Outpatient Services

**After office hours/ weekends/
Public holidays:**

- Visit the Emergency Department.

