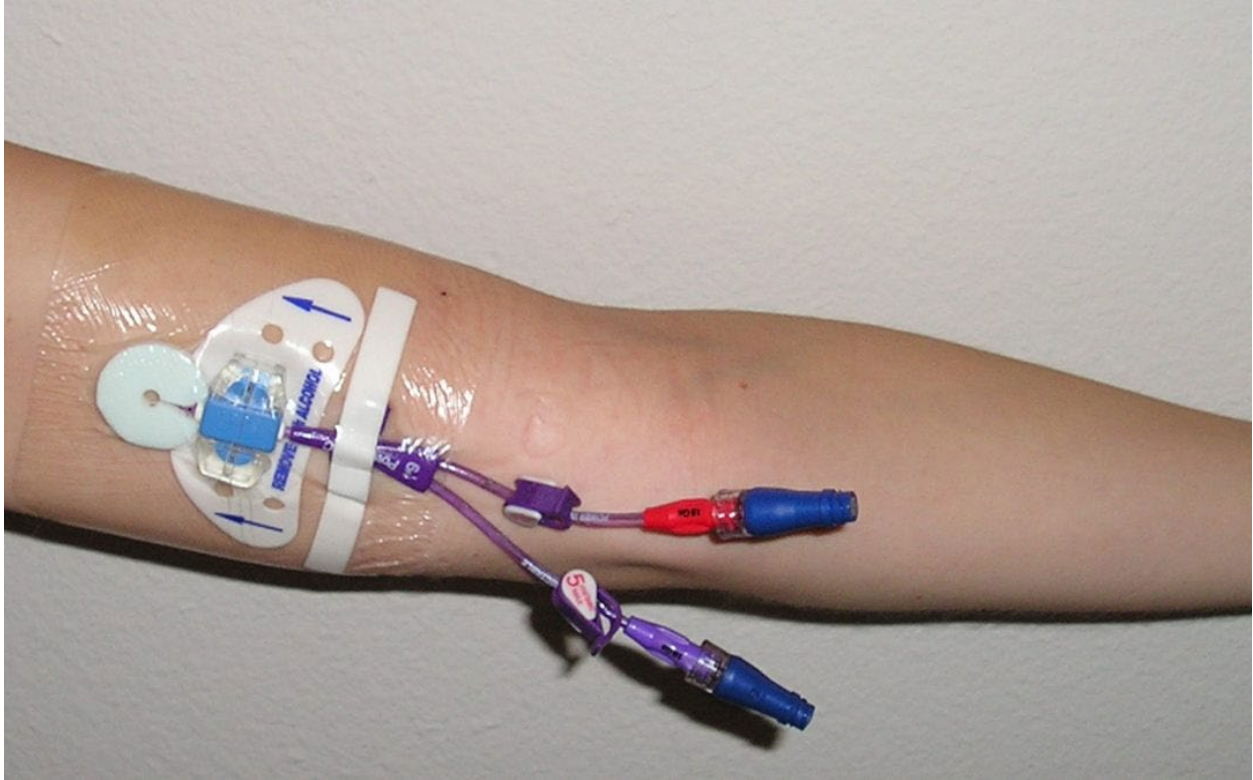


# Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Teaching Booklet For Patient and Family





The following information will describe what a PICC is, how it is put in, and how to care for your PICC.

**What is a PICC?**

PICC stands for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. It is a long, thin, flexible tube that is put into a vein in your arm and moved through the vein until it reaches a large blood vessel near your heart. Your PICC will be put in by a specially trained IV nurse.

**Why do I need a PICC?**

A PICC is needed to give you medicine, fluids, or nutrition through a tube to help you feel better.

**How long will I need the PICC?**

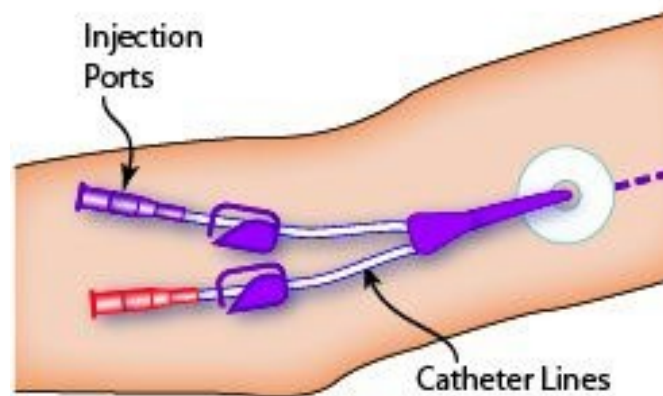
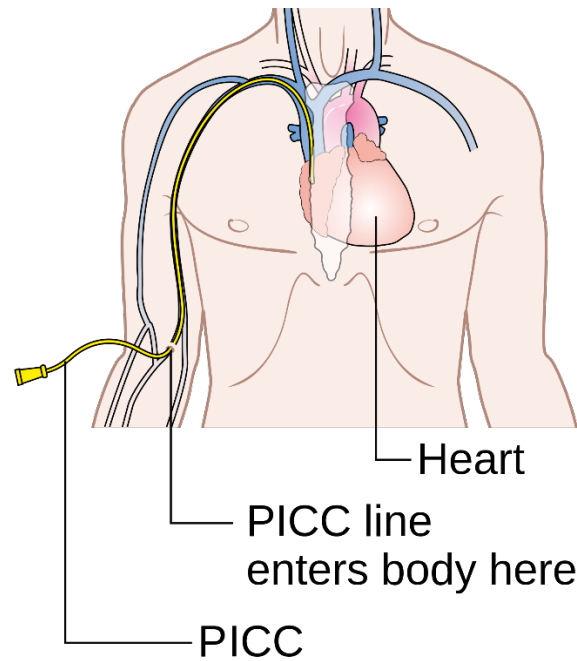
You will need the PICC until you feel better AND your treatment is done. When you do not need the PICC anymore, it will be taken out by the nurse.

**How does the Vascular Access nurse put in the PICC?**

The vascular access nurse will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have. The vascular access nurse will put in the PICC with the following basic steps:

1. The vascular access nurse will choose a vein on your arm that is good to put in the PICC. A special machine may be used to help the nurse see the veins better.

2. The vascular access nurse and assistant will each wear a mask, hat, gown, and gloves.
3. The area where the PICC will be put in your arm will be cleaned.
4. A small needle with medicine will be given to numb the skin.
5. The PICC will be put into your vein and moved through until it is completely in.
6. A bandage will be placed over the area where the PICC was put in your arm.



### What problems can happen with my PICC?

Rare problems that can happen with your PICC include:

- **Infection:** an infection can happen if the area where the PICC is placed is not kept clean and dry.
- **Irregular heartbeat:** your heart can beat faster than normal if the PICC is placed too far in your body.
- **Hole in the artery:** a hole in the artery can be made by accident while the PICC is being placed in your body.

- **Air in the blood:** air can get into the blood while the PICC is being placed in your body or if the PICC is not closed.
- **Blood clot:** the blood in your vein can thicken and form into a clot around the PICC.
- **PICC is blocked:** the PICC can become blocked if it is not flushed at the right times.

### **How do I take care of my PICC?**

It is important to take care of your PICC to keep it working correctly and prevent problems from happening. The following are ways to take care of your PICC:

- Keep your PICC and bandage clean and dry.
- Cover your PICC and bandage with plastic wrap and tape when you shower to prevent it from getting wet.
- Do not take baths, go in hot tubs, or go swimming.
- Do not wear shirts that are tight around the arms.
- Do not carry, lift, or pull anything heavier than 5 pounds.
- Do not do things that you need to move your arms a lot.
- Do not play sports or go running.
- Do not do exercises that need you to move your arms.
- Do not cut things near your PICC.
- Always clean the end connector with an alcohol wipe for 15 seconds before connecting medicines, fluids, or flushes.

### **Who changes my PICC bandage, and when is it changed?**

In the hospital, the vascular access team will look at your PICC bandage every day. Your bandage will be changed once a week, or sooner, if it has gotten loose, wet, or dirty.

When you are at home, your home care nurse will change your bandage. The nurse will check your bandage and decide how often it will need to be changed.

### **When should I call my home care nurse?**

- Your bandage gets wet, loose, or dirty.
- There is bleeding, redness, swelling, or pain in the arm where your PICC is placed.
- Liquid leaks from where your PICC is placed.
- Your PICC slips out, tears, or breaks.
- Your PICC does not flush easily.

### **When should I call my doctor?**

- You have a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher.
- You feel chills.
- You feel chest pain or shortness of breath.

#### **In summary:**

- A PICC is a long, thin, flexible tube that gives you medicine, fluid, or nutrition to help you feel better.
- The IV nurse, who is specially trained on PICCs, will put in your PICC.
- It is important to take care of your PICC so it works correctly and prevents problems from happening.
- Call your doctor or home care nurse if you have any problems with your PICC.

Thank you for choosing MGH for your care.