

PICC Line

What is a PICC line?

A Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) is a long, thin, soft and flexible tube.

These types of lines can stay in place for a long time. They have many uses. They may be used to:

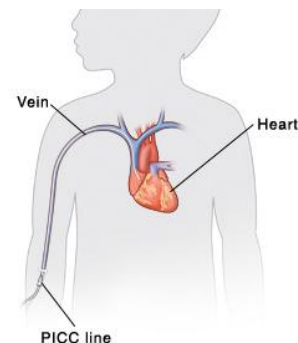
- Give fluids.
- Give medicines.
- Give blood products.
- Give IV nutrition.
- Draw blood for lab tests.



How is it put in?

- Everything will be explained to you ahead of time.
- A specially trained nurse or doctor puts in a PICC line. It may be done in the hospital room, operating room, or radiology department. Your child may be awake when the line is put in.
- Before the PICC line is put in, your child may get some medicine to help them relax and be more comfortable.
- If it is put in while your child is in the operating room, your child will be asleep and will not feel anything.
- An IV needle is used to enter the vein, so your child will receive a poke. Once the needle is in the vein, the PICC catheter is put in and moved through the IV needle into the vein. When the catheter is in the large vein leading to the heart, the IV needle is removed. Only the flexible PICC catheter stays.

The doctor or nurse will do a test to see that the line is in the right place.



Possible problems

- Some veins may not work well for a PICC line. This makes the procedure hard to do. The procedure may not be able to be done as planned.
- There is a chance of getting an infection.

Possible problems (cont)

- If blood clots at the tip of the PICC line or the vein around the line, it makes the line hard to flush. Movement of the PICC line farther out of the vein can cause the tip of the line to be in the wrong place. If the PICC is not in far enough, the IV fluids can bother the veins.
- If there is a break in the PICC line it will need to be replaced.
- Sometimes it is hard to remove the PICC line.

What to expect

- Your child's arm may be stiff and the chest may be sore for a few days after the procedure. The pain should go away in about 1 or 2 days.
- The arm may also look bruised. The bruising may take 1 to 2 weeks to go away.

What care is needed?

- A dressing will be put over the PICC. The dressing is changed weekly and when it becomes loose, wet or soiled. This is important because the dressing holds the PICC line in place. Let your child's nurse know if you notice the dressing should be changed.
- When the PICC line is not in use (capped), the line must be flushed. This is done with a Heparin/Vanco-Heparin solution to keep the line open or prevent it from clotting.



How is the PICC line removed?

- To remove the PICC line, the nurse or doctor will take off the dressing.
- The PICC line is cleaned and removed slowly. Taking the PICC line out does not hurt.
- The area is covered with a small dressing. The hole will heal on its own. After removal, keep a bandage over the site for 24 hours, or as directed by your child's doctor or nurse.

After healing, there may be a very small scar on the skin.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.