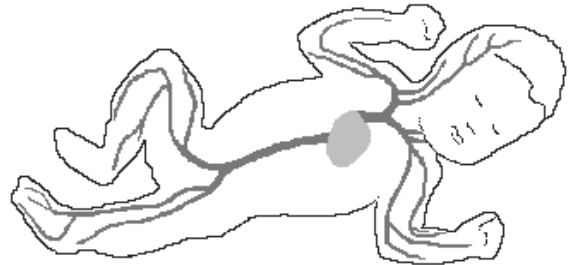


PICC Line for NICU Babies

(Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter)

What is a PICC line?

A PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) is a long, thin, soft and flexible tube. Most often it is put into a vein in the arm, leg. It can also be put in a vein in the scalp in infants. The tip of the PICC line is moved through the vein until it reaches a large vein near the heart. The PICC can stay in place for several weeks, if needed.



This drawing shows veins that can be used for PICC lines.

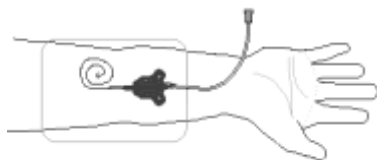
How is it put in?

- Everything will be explained to you ahead of time. You will be asked to give permission, or consent, before the line is put in.
- A specially trained nurse or doctor puts in a PICC line. Most often, it is done in the hospital room.
- 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.
- An x-ray will be done to see that the line is in the right place.

Why does my baby need a PICC line?

A PICC may be used if your baby needs an IV for a longer period of time, or has very few places to start IVs. For example, your baby may:

- Need a reliable IV line for medicines.
- Be recovering from surgery and cannot be fed.
- Be getting some feedings but still need more fluid and nutrition.



PICC line in an arm



PICC line
in a leg



Scalp PICC line in
a swaddled baby

What are possible risks or 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. To reduce this risk, the procedure is done under sterile conditions and a sterile dressing is put over the catheter. Special steps are also taken with everything given through the line.
- Movement of the PICC 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.
- The PICC could get blocked with blood clots or medications. If this happens, the PICC may need to be replaced.³
- If the catheter breaks, it may need to be replaced. If there is a complete break, a piece of the PICC could move up the vein and need a special procedure to remove it. **This is very rare.**
- The catheter tip could work its way outside the vein causing the IV fluid to leak into the area around the catheter tip. If the fluid leaks near the lungs or heart it could cause severe problems with breathing or heart beating. **This is very rare.**
- Sometimes it is hard to remove the PICC line.

Will my baby have pain?

Putting in the PICC line will hurt about the same as putting in a regular IV. It works best if the baby doesn't move around too much. Steps will be taken to comfort your baby:

- Your baby may want to suck on a pacifier. It can be dipped in sugar solution to help decrease pain (if ok with the medical team)
- Pain and sedative medicines are often given to make your baby more comfortable.
- Babies are usually swaddled (or bundled) with a blanket to help them feel more secure and comfortable while also helping them not move or wiggle too much.

Once the PICC line is in place, your baby should not have any pain and can move freely.

Other things to know

Since the PICC lines are so small, they are not normally used for drawing lab or giving blood transfusions. Doing so could cause the line to clot.

A dressing will be put over the PICC. The dressing is changed when it becomes loose, wet or soiled. This is important because the dressing holds the PICC line in place and protects against infection. Let your baby's nurse know if you notice the dressing should be changed.

When it is no longer needed, the PICC line will be taken out. The dressing is taken off and the area is cleaned. The PICC is removed slowly and is not painful. The area is then covered with a small dressing. The hole will heal on its own. 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.