



BRIGHAM AND
WOMEN'S HOSPITAL



DANA-FARBER
CANCER INSTITUTE

PICC Catheter *for* **IV Therapy**

A Patient Guide for:

PATIENT

PICC

A PICC is defined as a **P**eripherally **I**nserted **C**entral **C**atheter. A PICC is a special IV Catheter. It is put in an arm vein and ends in a large vein.

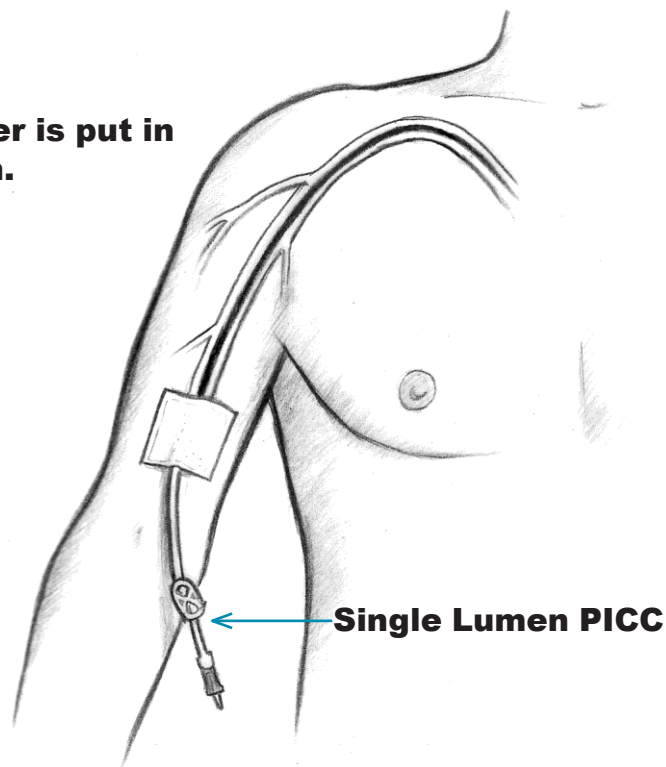
Everything is kept sterile when a PICC is put in. Afterwards, a chest X-ray is taken to make sure that the end of the catheter is in the right place. A PICC may stay in for many weeks or months.

The PICC can be used to:

- Give IV fluids, nutrition, and medicines
- Give blood products
- Take blood for tests

Some PICCs are Power-PICCs. They can also be used in a CT Scan or MRI to give contrast medicine.

The catheter is put in an arm vein.



What activities should I **NOT** do while I have a PICC?

While you have a PICC:

- Do not do any contact sports.
- Do not do activities that use your arm muscles. This includes weight lifting, vacuuming, bowling, golf, or tennis.
- Limit activities that may cause excessive sweating. This may loosen your dressing.
- Do not swim or soak in a tub.

PICC Care

Showering and Bathing

Keep your PICC dry! You may take baths or showers, but your PICC and all of its connections must be completely covered to be sure that the PICC and its dressing remain dry.

Keeping everything dry will help prevent it from getting infected or from accidentally coming out.

- Do **NOT** get your catheter or dressing wet.
- Do **NOT** allow your PICC to go under water in a pool or tub.
- To protect your PICC from getting wet in the shower or bath, cover it completely with a plastic wrap. Try using Press ‘n Seal® or the Bathguard® protective cover that is available in the Brigham and Women’s Hospital Gift Shop, located on the 2nd floor.

If your dressing gets wet, the dressing needs to be changed right away. Call your health care or Home Care Nurse to arrange to have your PICC dressing changed.

Flush Your PICC!

Each lumen of your PICC needs to be flushed once a day with a Heparin Flush. A lumen is a small tube within your catheter. Your health care provider or your Home Care Nurse will teach you how to flush your PICC.*

Keep Things Clean

- Before you touch your PICC, always wash and dry your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub, like Purell.
- Store your supplies in a clean and dry space.
- Follow any specific instructions that you have been taught.



Catheter Care

Take care of your PICC every day. This will help prevent infection and help prevent clots from forming inside your catheter.

- Only persons who have been trained by a nurse should take care of or use your catheter.
- You will receive patient education information before you leave. If you do not, please ask your nurse.
- If you will have home care after your procedure, check with your provider to make sure that it has been arranged.

Remember:

- Keep your PICC dry.
- Flush your catheter.*
- Change your catheter caps.*
- Keep things sterile.
- Check your PICC dressing daily to make sure it is not loose.
- **DO NOT** use sharp objects, like scissors, knives, or safety pins around your catheter. These can damage your catheter.

* These instructions are available on Dana-Farber's website and through the Brigham and Women's Hospital Patient Education web page.

Danger Signs

Call your health care or Home Care Nurse **RIGHT AWAY** if:

- Your dressing gets wet, soiled, or becomes loose
- Your catheter appears to be coming out
- Your catheter becomes kinked or hard to flush

Call your doctor **RIGHT AWAY** for any signs of infection:

- You have redness or warmth around your catheter
- You have chills or a fever of 100.5° F or higher
- You have bleeding, swelling, or drainage around your catheter
- Your arm becomes swollen

About Your Catheter

Your catheter is a Power-PICC? _____ Yes _____ No

Catheter information:

_____ Single lumen _____ Fr

_____ Double lumen _____ Fr

_____ Triple lumen _____ Fr

Your PICC is the right size for your body.

The catheter length is: _____ cm long _____ cm in

The kind of catheter is: _____

It was put in on: _____

Save and share this information if requested by your care providers.

Remember!

- Keep your PICC dry.
- Flush your PICC daily.

Call Right Away!

- If your dressing gets wet, soiled, or becomes loose
- If your catheter appears to be coming out
- If your catheter becomes kinked or hard to flush
- If you have redness or warmth around your catheter
- If you have chills or a fever of 100.5° F or higher
- If you have bleeding, swelling, or drainage around your catheter
- If your arm becomes swollen

The above information contains some, but not necessarily all, of the information that you may need to care for your central line. Please speak with your doctor or nurse if you have questions or issues you may experience.

This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team about your treatment and effects you may experience during and after the use of a central line.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.

Developed by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital Central Line Education Team, Aug. 2013.