

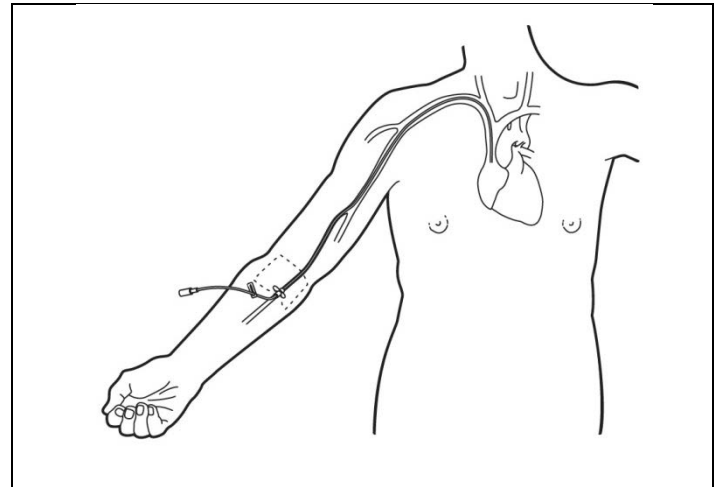
# PICC

## Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter

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A PICC is a long thin tube called a catheter.

The PICC is put into a vein near your elbow and threaded up to a large vein with the tip just above the heart.



### How long will I have a PICC?

The PICC can stay in your arm for weeks or months. It **may** be used to take blood samples, and for giving different treatments and medications at the same time such as:

- fluids
- chemotherapy
- blood products
- antibiotics and other medications

When the PICC is not in use, the end is covered with a cap. When you no longer need a PICC, it can be easily removed by a nurse.

### How is the PICC line put in?

- Your PICC is put in the PICC Resource Centre which is in Diagnostic Imaging at the Juravinski Hospital.
- Medicine is used to numb the skin. A needle is used to insert the catheter under the skin and into the vein. The needle is removed and the catheter is threaded up the into the large vein just above the heart.
- A machine will show your heart rhythm. We know the PICC is in the right spot by watching your heart rhythm. An x-ray may need to be done to confirm it is in the right spot.

## How do I take care of my PICC?

- Your PICC will need routine care. You will receive weekly care for your PICC by a visiting nurse in the community who will come directly to your home. You may have the option of attending a special clinic to have this done.
- The PICC is secured in place and covered with a dressing. The dressing needs to be kept clean and dry, and is changed once a week. You may shower with your PICC as long as you keep it dry by wrapping your arm in plastic wrap such as saran wrap. The JCC pharmacy sells a waterproof sleeve for patients with PICCs which can be worn in the shower. The cost is \$15.00 +tax.
- When not being used, the PICC can become blocked. To prevent this, fluid is flushed through the PICC once a week. A family member or friend may want to learn how to flush the PICC.

## When you have a PICC do not:



- use a blood pressure cuff or tourniquet for blood work over the PICC
- lift heavy objects with the PICC arm such as a 10 pound (5 kg) sack of potatoes, pot of water, heavy purse, small children
- use scissors near the PICC
- swim, play contact sports
- shovel, vacuum, cut the grass or garden with the PICC arm

## Possible problems

- **Infection:** Sometimes an infection can happen around the area where the catheter goes into the vein. The area may get red, swollen or you may develop a fever. You need to tell the doctor or nurse right away.
- **Blockage:** Sometimes the inside of the catheter can become blocked. This can make it hard to flush or give fluids. If this is the case, the chemotherapy nurses use medication to flush into the catheter to dissolve the blockage.
- **Reaction to the dressing:** If you develop itching or rash around your PICC tell your nurse. Wet skin from the antiseptic used to clean the skin can cause a reaction. **The skin needs to be dry before putting the dressing on.**