

# Living with your valved PICC

## problems and what to do

---

- ✓ Always wash your hands before you do anything with your PICC, IV tubing or dressing.
- ✓ Gloves are worn if you have a cut, a rash or an infection on your hands.
- ✓ When cleaning with an alcohol wipe or antiseptic swab – rub well with friction for 15 seconds. Allow to dry.
- ✓ As you become more independent with your PICC care, here are some suggestions to help you if you run into problems.
- ✓ If you are not sure what to do or have a concern about your PICC, call your visiting nurse.

**Nurse's name and phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<b>Wet around the cap.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to moisture, such as a shower.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry off with an alcohol wipe/ antiseptic swab.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cap is loose.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clean the connection between cap and PICC.</li> <li>2. Put on a new cap.</li> <li>3. Call your visiting nurse.</li> </ol>
<b>Cap falls off.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cap is not tight, or</li> <li>• Cap has cracked.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If your PICC has clamps, make sure they are all closed.</li> <li>2. Clean the end of the PICC.</li> <li>3. Put on a new cap.</li> <li>4. Call your visiting nurse.</li> </ol>

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p><b>Sluggish to flush.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PICC may be kinked or twisted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Straighten any kinks or twists.</li> <li>You may have to check under the dressing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build up of blood or medication inside the PICC.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flush well in between medications and when capping off.</li> <li>You may need to flush with more solution or more often.</li> <li>Call your visiting nurse.</li> </ol>
<p><b>When you are flushing, you cannot push the solution in.</b> Do not force the flush you may rupture the PICC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a kink or a twist in the PICC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Straighten any kinks or twists.</li> <li>You may need to check under the dressing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tip of the PICC is resting against the vein.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try changing your position, sit up, lie down, move your head.</li> <li>Take a deep breath and lift your arms and then try again.</li> </ol>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your PICC may be blocked or out of position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call your visiting nurse.</li> <li>You may need to come to the hospital to unblock.</li> </ul>

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p><b>The IV is not running well.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clamps on the IV tubing may be closed or there is a pump problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the entire system.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tip of the PICC is against the wall of the vein.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try changing your position; sit up, lie down or move your head.</li> <li>• Take a deep breath and lift your arms and then try again.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PICC may be kinked, twisted or blocked. You may have to check under the dressing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check and straighten any kinks or twists.</li> <li>• Call your visiting nurse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leaking at the site or under the dressing.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PICC may have a crack in it.</li> <li>• The PICC may be broken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cap off PICC if infusing.</li> <li>• If there is bleeding tie the end off, or bend the catheter back on itself and tape. You may need to carefully pull 2.5 to 5 cm (1 to 2 in) of the catheter out from the site.</li> <li>• Cover with a clean dressing or cloth.</li> <li>• Immediately call and go to the hospital where your PICC was inserted or emergency.</li> </ul>

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
<p><b>At the site where the PICC leaves your skin or along the path of the PICC you notice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• redness</li> <li>• swelling</li> <li>• drainage</li> <li>• tenderness</li> <li>• soreness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICC problem.</li> <li>• Infection.</li> <li>• Irritation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your visiting nurse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fever, chills, sweating</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be an infection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call and go to the hospital where your PICC was inserted or emergency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Swelling of the arm, neck or face, on the side that the PICC is located.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PICC may be causing a problem with your venous system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call and go to the hospital where your PICC was inserted or emergency.</li> </ul>

**Do not use force to flush the PICC.**