

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

You need a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) for your treatment. A catheter is a small, soft tube that is inserted into a vein in your arm and then moved through your vein until the tip sits in the large vein (vena cava) near your heart. A PICC is used when treatment requires medication or nutrition for weeks or months. When the PICC is no longer needed, your health care provider will remove it and your skin will begin to heal.

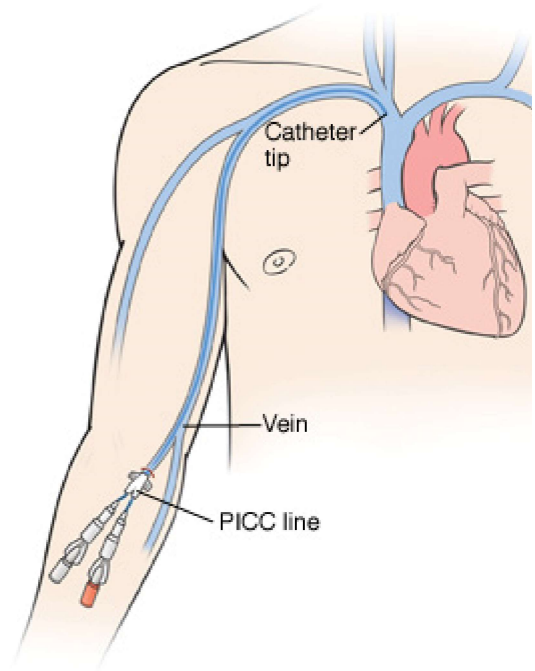
Why Do I Need a PICC?

A PICC takes the place of a standard IV (intravenous) line. The PICC can stay in place longer, resulting in fewer needlesticks and less damage to the small veins where an IV would normally be inserted. Your provider can give you more details about why you need the PICC.

Receiving a PICC

A procedure is done to place the PICC in your body. This will be done in your hospital room or the radiology department.

- To lower the risk of infection, you will be covered with a large sterile sheet (drape), exposing only the spot where the PICC will be placed. An antiseptic solution is used to clean the exposed skin.
- Ultrasound images may be viewed on a video monitor. These are used to help find the best vein to use.
- To prevent pain during the PICC placement, the area where the PICC will be placed is numbed with an injection of local anesthetic (pain medication).
- After the pain medication takes effect, the catheter is gently passed into the vein and advanced until the tip reaches the large vein, vena cava, close to the heart.
- The other end of the catheter extends from your skin. A securement device (such as STATLOCK) is used to keep the catheter attached to the skin.
- The doctor or nurse will flush the catheter with saline solution, to clear it.
- An x-ray may be used to confirm the catheter's position and to check for problems.



A PICC may have more than one lumen (channel). This means that different fluids or medications can be given at once. Keep in mind that your PICC should be accessed only by trained medical professionals.

Risks and Complications

As with any procedure, getting a PICC has certain risks. Common risks include:

- Infection
- Bleeding problems
- An irregular heartbeat – Tell your provider if you have an unusual heaviness or flutter in your chest.
- Injury to the vein or to lymph ducts near the vein
- Inflammation of the vein (phlebitis)
- Clots or air bubbles in the bloodstream
- Blockage of a blood vessel leading to the lung (pulmonary embolism)
- Nerve injury
- Accidental insertion into an artery instead of a vein
- Catheter not positioned correctly