

Information About Your Child's Procedure

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

Read this form so you understand the procedure and its risks. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand.

What is a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC line)?

A PICC line is a thin, soft catheter (tube) that is inserted into a vein in the arm, leg or neck. The tip of the catheter is positioned in a large vein that carries blood into the heart. A PICC line is used for long-term intravenous (IV) antibiotics, nutrition or medications, and for blood draws.

How is a PICC line placed?

First we will perform an ultrasound to evaluate the access vein. Then an interventional radiologist or nurse will insert the PICC line, using live X-ray (fluoroscopy) to assist with proper location. (Your child will be protected by an X-ray shield.)

Will my child be awake during the procedure?

Younger patients are usually given IV sedation so they aren't awake during the procedure. If the child is older or has medical problems that prevent us from giving IV sedation, we will use only local numbing medicine.

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Will my child be in any pain?

If your child is awake, he or she will feel a small needle prick when we inject the local numbing medicine.

How long does the procedure take?

Approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

What risks are associated with this procedure?

The procedure is considered low-risk. However, potential complications include:

- bleeding
- infection
- formation of a blood clot in the vein (thrombosis)
- abnormal heart rhythm
- puncture of adjacent structures (such as other veins or arteries)
- contrast reaction (allergic reaction to the X-ray dye)

How long can a PICC line stay in?

If properly cared for, a PICC line can stay in for weeks to months.

Can my child shower with a PICC line?

We will place gauze and a clear bandage, which must remain dry at all times while the PICC line is in place. Approximately two days after the PICC line is placed, a nurse at the hospital or a home-care nurse will perform the first bandage change. After this, it is OK to shower as long as the PICC line is covered with a water-resistant bandage. We will teach you how to make a water-resistant bandage.

You may also sponge-bathe your child, as long as you keep the PICC site dry at all times.

Are there any activity restrictions?

Your child will be able to resume most activities, including day care or school. Your child should be discouraged from activities, such as football and rough playing, which may result in a pull to the PICC line and lead to damage or loss of the catheter. If you have questions about which activities are OK, please ask your doctor.

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- fever higher than 101° Fahrenheit
- catheter pulled back or out
- red or swollen arm, leg or neck
- drainage (such as pus) from the catheter site

Call Interventional Radiology between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 215-590-7000. At the first prompt push 1, and at the second prompt push 2.

At all other times, call 215-590-1000 and ask to speak to the interventional radiologist on call.

The Interventional Radiology team is here to help you and your child. Please ask us if you have any questions or if anything is not clear.

Thank you!

PICC Line

