

Peripherally-Inserted Central Catheter

Why is this procedure done?

A peripherally-inserted central catheter (PICC) line is a long, thin flexible catheter that is placed into a vein in your upper arm. The end of the PICC line sits in the large vessels leading to your heart where there is higher amounts of blood flow which decreases damage to your veins. Your PICC line is inserted by a specially trained Registered Nurse using sterile technique. The PICC line is checked to make sure it is in the right place before it is used. If cared for properly, a PICC can stay in your body for as long as you need it for your treatment. Having a PICC can allow for faster discharge from hospital as well as treatment in the community.

PICC lines are used:

- If you need to have IV medication or fluids for more than 2 weeks
- When drugs need to be given through an IV and the veins in your arm are very hard to find
- To draw blood for tests
- To give you blood

Use, Care and Maintenance of your PICC Line:

- Only Healthcare Providers trained in the correct use, care and maintenance of your PICC line should access it. Improper use of a PICC line can lead to several complications including infection, blood clots, nerve damage or air embolism.
- Avoid blood pressure checks and repetitive movements or heavy lifting greater than 15-20 lbs with your arm where your PICC is present.
- Keep your PICC line dry and clean. Cover it when you shower.
- Your PICC dressing should be changed the next day then weekly or as needed. Ask the nurse changing dressing to ensure PICC site is dry prior to covering with dressing to avoid complications.
- PICC insertion site may be achy for the next 12 hours, this is a common side effect.
- Home and Community Care (HCC) – 1-888-721-2222

For PICC related issues that are not an emergency please contact:

Phone: 705-526-1300 ext. 5248

Email: piccservice@gbgh.on.ca

Our contact hours are: Monday – Friday 0900-1700

For any complications, please go to the closest emergency department.

When to seek Emergency Medical Care?

- Signs of infection including a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or chills.
- Sudden shortness of breath or a sudden onset of chest pain.
- Your PICC is pulled out, whether partially or fully. If it is pulled out partially, **do not** push it back in. If it is pulled out fully, cover the site with a dressing. **Do not** throw the PICC away. Your health care provider will need to check it.
- Unable to flush the PICC or nurses are unable to draw blood from the PICC.
- Your PICC line is leaking.
- You lose the caps to your PICC line.
- You hear a "flushing" sound when the PICC is flushed.
- You feel your heart racing or skipping beats.
- You have swelling in your hand, fingers, upper arm or neck.
- You have ongoing achiness, numbness or tingling in your arm, hands, or fingers of the arm where the PICC line is placed.
- You have redness, warmth or the skin feels hard and raised at the PICC line site or in the arm with the PICC line.
- In a medical emergency, call 911 immediately.