

Peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC)

A PICC is a central venous access device (CVAD). It is used to give treatments and blood transfusions into your bloodstream, and to take blood samples.

What is a PICC?

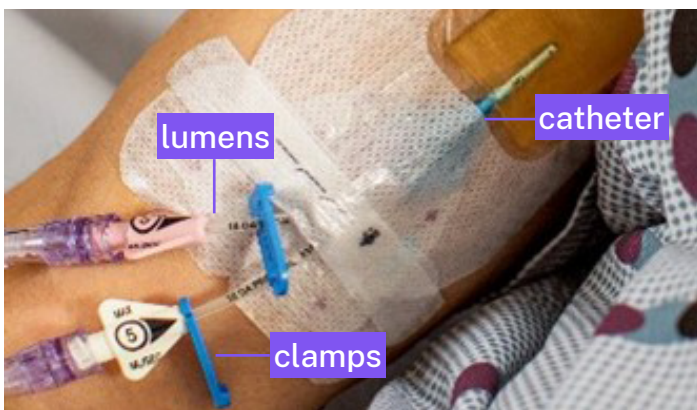
A PICC is used instead of cannulas (needles in your arm) for your treatments. Cannulas are put in for each treatment, but a PICC stays in for the length of your treatments. This makes having frequent, repeated, continuous or at-home cancer treatments easier. Some types of PICCs can also be used for some types of scans.

A PICC is a long, flexible hollow tube. The tube is called a **catheter**. The hollow space in the tube is called a **lumen**. It can have one or two lumens, sometimes three. Each lumen may have a small clamp and has a cap on the end.

A length of the PICC and the lumens stays on the outside of your inner upper arm and is covered by a dressing. The other end sits in a vein just above the heart.

Your nurse will give your treatment, or take blood from you, through the lumen. Your treatment travels through the tube straight into your bloodstream.

You may also hear PICCs called a **central line** or **CVAD**.



Double lumen PICC
Image permission: 3M Medical Solutions Division

How is my PICC put in?

- It will be put in by a specially trained member of your healthcare team.
- This can happen in the day unit, on the ward, in the radiology department or possibly the operating theatre.
- The PICC will be inserted into a vein in your inner upper arm.
- A medication may be used to numb the area where the catheter is inserted into your arm.
- A dressing keeps the area clean and helps to keep the catheter in place, which is very important.
- You may have some mild discomfort for a few days.

Do you know?

Date PICC was put in: _____

Date of your next dressing: _____

Who and when to contact if you have any questions or concerns? _____

Contact numbers

Daytime: _____

Night/weekend: _____

How do I care for my PICC?

Each day

- Wash your hands before touching your PICC or dressing. Check to see:
 - the dressing is clean, dry and not peeling back
 - skin is not red, swollen or itchy
 - the length of the catheter coming out of your arm has not changed.
- When bathing, cover the dressing to keep it dry and stop it peeling back.

Physical activity

Research shows that continuing physical activity during your treatment is good for your general wellbeing. However, there are some physical activities you will need to avoid, please discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

Physical activity to avoid

- exercise or activities where you repeatedly move your arm e.g. swinging your arm in tennis, golf, or lifting weights
- water sports or water activities like swimming to keep the dressing dry.

Things to avoid

- pulling on your PICC
- getting your PICC dressing wet
- using sharp objects near your PICC.

Common questions

✔ What happens when I am not having treatment?

Your PICC is flushed and the dressing is changed every 7 days. Flushing ensures it's working. You can change the dressing earlier if it's wet, dirty, or peeling, arrange this with your nurse. In the hospital, nurses will care for it; at home, options include visiting a day unit, having a community nurse visit, or training a family member or caregiver.

✔ How long does my PICC stay in?

Your PICC can stay in as long as it is needed. This can be weeks, months or longer.

✔ How is my PICC removed?

When your PICC is no longer needed, your nurse will remove it, placing a dressing on your upper arm for 2 days until the skin heals.

⚠ Important things to look out for:

Contact your nurse or doctor immediately if:

- you have a temperature of 38°C or higher
- the cap has come off the end of your PICC:
 - wash your hands and clamp the PICC first
 - if the PICC doesn't have a clamp on it, bend it over
 - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one
- your PICC is damaged or split:
 - wash your hands, clamp the PICC and place gentle pressure over the damaged area
 - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one
- you have fluid leaking from or around your PICC
- you accidentally remove your PICC:
 - wash your hands apply pressure over the area for 5 minutes
 - cover it with a sterile dressing if you have one.

If you can't contact your doctor or nurse, go to the nearest hospital emergency department for help.

Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible in working hours if:

- you have redness, pain, or swelling
 - under your dressing (including any bleeding)
 - in your arm, neck, or chest area
- your dressing has been wet, is peeling back or there is ooze under the dressing
- your skin is itchy, sore, or stinging under the dressing.

For information for patient and carers scan the QR code



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