

ONCOLOGY

After Chemotherapy Care Instructions

PICC Line Care

What is a PICC line?

A PICC (peripherally inserted central catheter) line is a long-term intravenous (IV) catheter. It is inserted into a small vein in your arm and threaded into a larger vein in your chest. The PICC line has been inserted to make your IV treatments easier. The use of this catheter is to draw blood and give medicines.

What can I do at home to care for myself?

- Keep your dressing clean and dry at all times.
- When showering, wrap the PICC line in plastic to keep it from getting wet. Avoid letting the water hit it directly.
- Do not lift more than 5 pounds.
- Any repetitive motion or exercise is not advised on the arm with the PICC line.
- After the PICC line is inserted, the dressing should be changed in 24 hours. Afterward, it is changed weekly. If the dressing becomes soiled, wet, or begins to lift, the dressing will need to be changed.
- Make sure that you make an appointment with a nurse for your weekly dressing changes.
- After the PICC line is inserted, you may have some bruising and tenderness at or above the exit site. If so, apply dry, warm compresses above the PICC line for 15 minutes four times a day for 24 hours. If you do not get relief, call your physician.
- Flush your catheter as your nurse taught you.

When should I call my physician?

- Drainage or leaking occurs at the insertion site or anywhere along the PICC line.
- Fever.
- Chills.

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continued

- Shortness of breath.
- Warmth, swelling, redness, or pain on the PICC line arm or at the insertion site.
- If you are unable to flush the catheter.
- If your dressing becomes soiled, wet, or begins to lift.
- If your PICC line is damaged or broken, secure the end with paper tape and go to the nearest Emergency Department.

If you cannot reach your health care team or your symptoms get worse, go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.