

PICC Insertion

WHAT TO EXPECT

A Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter or “PICC line” is a thin, soft plastic tube, like an intravenous (IV) line that allows you to receive medicines and fluids. A PICC line stays in place as long as it is needed. A PICC goes into a vein in your upper arm, with the end of the catheter sitting in a large vein near your heart. The PICC helps carry nutrients and medicines into your body, and can also be used to draw blood when you need to have blood tests.

BEFORE THE TEST

- The technologist and/or radiologist will speak to you before the test and address any questions or concerns that you may have.
- You will need to sign a consent form giving us permission to perform the procedure.

DURING THE TEST

- You will be lying on your back on an X-ray table for this procedure with your arm out.
- A tourniquet is tied around your arm near your shoulder.
- The area where the needle is to be inserted is cleaned by an aseptic solution.
- The radiologist will use an ultrasound to confirm the area where the needle is to be inserted.
- Localized anesthetic (i.e. freezing) will be used on your skin to numb the area where the needle goes in.
- Once your vein is successfully accessed, a guidewire is fed through to ensure a path for the PICC. The needle is subsequently removed, and the puncture site is dilated. The guidewire is removed and the PICC is fed through until it sits in a large vein near your heart; around the superior vena cava (SVC) just above the right atrium.
- The test lasts between 30 minutes to 1 hour.

AFTER THE TEST

- A dressing is applied to the PICC insertion site to secure it in-place.
- It is normal to have a little pain or swelling around the site for 2 or 3 days after the PICC has been put in. Refrain from lifting anything with this arm, and avoid strenuous activity for up to 2 weeks post-insertion.
- It is okay to take showers/baths as long as water is kept off the site. This can be achieved by wrapping your PICC in plastic (i.e. saran wrap) prior to your shower/bath. Make sure the dressing is secure and the catheter site stays dry to avoid infection.

If you develop unexpected symptoms (including but not limited to: fever, severe pain, increased redness or tenderness in the arm, bleeding or excessive leakage from the site), call your doctor and/or go to the Emergency Department right away.