

PICC Line Insertion

What is a PICC Insertion?

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 needed.

A PICC is a long, thin tube (called a catheter) that goes into a vein in your upper arm. The end of the catheter winds up in a large vein near your heart.

The PICC helps carry nutrients and medicines into your body. It is also used to draw blood when you need to have blood tests.

A PICC is used when you need intravenous medical treatment over a long period of time.

A radiologist will insert the PICC line in the Diagnostic Imaging Department where the procedure is done.

Proceed to the Diagnostic Imaging Department on H1. Take a number at reception. When your number is called, check in with the receptionist. A staff member will escort you to the room where your procedure will be done. You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.

Inform the technologist/nurse/radiologist know if you are pregnant, have a pacemaker, and/or are on blood thinners.

How is a PICC inserted?

The technologist and/or radiologist will obtain medical history, check allergies, explain the procedure, explain risks and will require written consent.

- You will lie on your back on the x-ray table.
- A tourniquet is tied around your arm near your shoulder.
- The area where the needle is inserted is cleaned.
- Ultrasound is used to choose the vein and guide the needle into your vein. Ultrasound looks inside your body with a device that is moved over your skin.
- The area where the needle is inserted is numbed. This may sting for a moment.

- A needle is inserted, then a guide wire and catheter. The guide wire and catheter are moved through your vein into the proper spot, the Superior Vena Cava (SVC).
- During this process, the needle puncture site is made a little larger with a scalpel. This does not hurt.

How long will the PICC insertion take?

The examination will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes.

Post examination instructions

It is normal to have a little pain or swelling around the site for 2 or 3 days after the catheter is put in place. Take it easy. Do not lift anything with that arm or do strenuous activity for about 2 weeks.

It is okay to take showers and baths if you keep water off the site. This can be achieved by wrapping your PICC in plastic after your catheter is placed. When you do, make sure the dressing are secure and your catheter site stays dry. Do not let the catheter site go under water if you are soaking in a bathtub.

Contact your physician, call Diagnostic Imaging (416-469-6580 Ext.6083) or go to the Emergency Department of the hospital nearest to you if you experience problems with your PICC line.

Questions?

If you have any questions before or after your examination, call the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-469-6580 Ext. 6083