



Patient Information Leaflet

# **PICC Lines (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters)**

**Produced by:**  
Lead Nurse for OHPiT

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**If you are unable to read this leaflet because English is not your first language, please ask someone who speaks English to telephone PALS on 01983 534850 for further information and help.**

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**Polish:**

Jeśli nie jesteś w stanie przeczytać tej ulotki bo angielski nie jest pierwszym językiem, poproś kogoś, kto mówi po angielsku, o kontakt telefoniczny z (PALS 01983 534850) aby uzyskać więcej informacji i pomoc

**Russian:**

Если вы не можете прочитать этот буклет на английском языке потому что не является первым языке, пожалуйста, попросите кого-нибудь, кто говорит на английском языке для телефонного (PALS 01983 534850) для получения дополнительной информации и помощи

**Turkish:**

Eğer İngilizce ana diliniz değilse, çünkü bu broşürü okumak için yapamıyorsanız, daha fazla bilgi için 01983 534850 üzerinde PALS telefon İngilizce bilen birine sormak ve yardım lütfen

**Bulgarian:**

Ако не сте в състояние да прочетете тази листовка, тъй като английският не е първи език, попитайте някой, който говори английски, за да телефонирам (PALS на 01983 534850) за повече информация и помощ

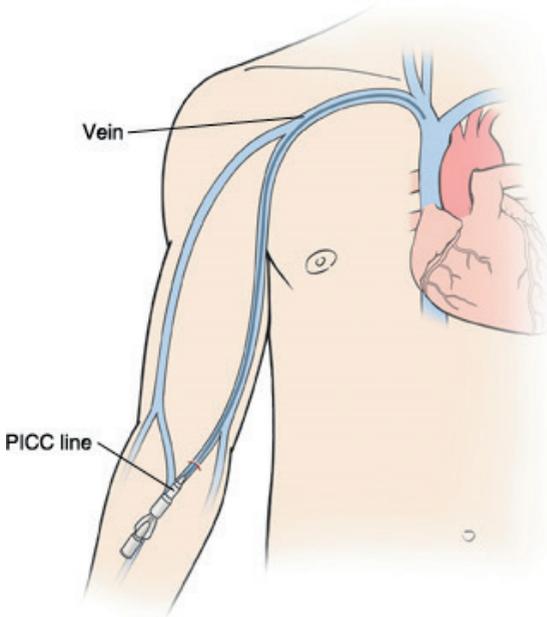
**Czech:**

Pokud nejste schopni přečíst tuto příbalovou informaci, protože angličtina není vaším rodným jazykem, zeptejte se někoho, kdo mluví anglicky na telefonní PALS na 01983 534850 pro další informace a pomoc

**Bengali:**

আপনি ইংরেজি আপনার প্রথম ভাষা না থাকার কারণে এই লফিলটে পড়তে অক্ষম হন, তাহলে আরও তথ্যের জন্য 01983 534850 নভেগিশেন PALS টেলিফোনে ইংরেজি কথা কতে জিজ্ঞাসা করুন এবং সাহায্য করুন

## What is a PICC Line?



A 'PICC' – Peripherally (from the outside) Inserted (put in) Central (into the large heart vessels) Catheter (flexible tube) is a useful way to give easy access for continuing treatments that need to be given into a vein. It is inserted into one of the veins of the arm just above the bend of the elbow. It is then slid into the vein until the tip sits in a large vein just above the heart.

The space in the middle of the tube is called the lumen. Sometimes the tube has one or two lumens (known as single or double lumen). This allows different treatments to be given at the same time. At the end of the tube outside the body, each lumen has a special cap, to which a drip line or syringe can be attached. Sometimes there is a clamp to keep the tube closed when it is not in use.

## **What are they used for?**

The PICC line can be used to give you treatments such as Chemotherapy, antibiotics, intravenous fluids and feeding. It can also be used to take samples of your blood for testing. You can go home with the PICC in and it can be left in for weeks or months. This makes it possible for you to have your treatment without having needles frequently inserted into your veins. This may be particularly helpful if your veins are hard to find or have been hardened by previous chemotherapy treatment.

## **How is the line put in?**

Your PICC will be put in by a specially trained Nurse or Doctor, in an outpatient department or on the ward. It will be put in using a local anaesthetic, so that you do not feel any pain.

First, the skin in the area where the PICC will be inserted is numbed. When the skin is completely numb, a needle will be inserted. While the needle is in the vein, the PICC is threaded through it into the large vein which leads to your heart. This should not take long and is usually painless. The PICC will be held securely in place by a transparent dressing. You will then have a chest X-ray to check that the end of the tube is in the correct position.

## **Possible problems when putting in the PICC**

If your veins are small, it may be difficult to put the PICC in. Sometimes it can be difficult to thread the PICC up the vein towards the heart. If this happens, it is possible to try again using a different vein.

Sometimes the PICC seems to go in easily but the X-ray shows it is not in the right place. If this happens it will be taken out and replaced.

## **Care of your PICC**

When your line is not being used there is a slight risk that it may become blocked. To stop this occurring, a small amount of fluid is flushed into the line using a syringe. This is done regularly, usually once a week. The dressing will also need to be changed each week to reduce the risk of infection.

As it is difficult to do this yourself with one hand, the Nurses at the hospital may do it for you or arrange for a District Nurse to visit you at home. A partner, relative or friend can also be taught to do this if they feel happy to.

## **Possible problems**

### **Infection**

It is possible for an infection to develop inside or around the place where the line goes into the vein. If this area becomes red, swollen or oozes, or if you develop a temperature, you should tell your hospital Doctor or Nurse. If you are being treated at home, contact the OHPiT Nurse/Chemotherapy Nurse or the District Nurses. You will be given antibiotics or, occasionally, the line may have to be removed.

### **Clots**

It is possible for a blood clot (thrombosis) to form in your vein at the tip of the PICC. If you do develop a blood clot, you will be given medicines to dissolve the clot and your line may have to be removed. Signs of a blood clot around the PICC include swelling, redness or tenderness in the arm, chest area or up into the neck (on the same side as the PICC).

### **Air in line**

Air must not be allowed to get into your PICC line. The clamps should always be closed when the line is not in use. The line must not be left unclamped when the caps are not in place.

### **Break or cut in the PICC**

It is important that the PICC line is not cut or split. Do not use scissors near the PICC. If it does get damaged you should contact your hospital immediately as it may need to be removed if it cannot be repaired while still in place.

## **How the PICC line is removed**

When you no longer need a PICC it will be removed. A Nurse will usually do this for you. It will be gently pulled out. This is a painless procedure that takes only a few minutes. A pressure dressing will be applied to the old PICC site and you will be advised to keep your arm still for a few minutes to prevent the site from bleeding.

**If you have any queries or concerns about the content of this leaflet please call (01983) 524081 and ask to speak to the relevant department.**

If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the PALS Team, telephone **01983 534850**, who will advise you.

Valuables should not be brought into the hospital. If patients have to bring in valuable items they should ask a nurse to store them safely and request a receipt for the items. You may not be able to have the valuable items returned if the time of discharge from hospital is out of hours.

We are sorry but the Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items not given for safe keeping.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues online at: **www.nhs.uk**

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: **111**

### **We Value Your Views On Our Service**

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the PALS Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on **01983 534850**.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive  
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust  
St Mary's Hospital  
Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on **03000 61 61 61** or at **enquiries@cqc.org.uk**

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.