



## **PICC LINE (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter)**

The following information is a brief description of the PICC Line. If you have any questions after reading this information, please speak with your nurse.

### **What is a PICC Line?**

- A PICC (**P**eripherally **I**nserted **C**entral **C**atheter) is a long, thin flexible tube, or *catheter*, placed in a vein, through which medications, blood products and fluids can be given.
- The PICC may be 16 to 24 inches long. It is inserted in a large vein in your arm near the bend of the elbow, and then threaded through the vein to the superior vena cava, a large blood vessel that leads to your heart.
- A PICC is inserted in persons needing intravenous (IV) infusions over a long period of time. It prevents the need for frequent needle sticks for IV insertion since the PICC line can stay in for up to six months.

### **Where is the PICC Insertion Procedure Done?**

- The procedure is done in the Interventional Radiology Department. It usually takes about 30 minutes.

### **What happens before the procedure?**

Prior to the procedure:

- Blood tests must be done beforehand, one day during the week before the procedure.

Day of the procedure:

- The procedure will be explained and then you will be asked to sign a consent form giving your permission for the catheter insertion.
- When called for the procedure, you will be asked to urinate and change into a hospital gown.

### **What Happens During the Procedure?**

- The insertion is done under fluoroscopy (x-ray guidance).
- The site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and the catheter will be inserted.
- A dressing will be put over the insertion site.



## What Happens After the Insertion Procedure?

- The PICC insertion site must always be covered with a dressing.
- Keep the catheter and dressing dry at all times.
- You will be taught how to take care of your catheter.

## Things to Watch For:

- Routinely check the catheter site for any signs of infection, such as swelling, redness, drainage or pain.
- Notify your doctor immediately if a hole or crack develops in the catheter.
- Notify your doctor or nurse immediately if you should develop any of the following:
  - fever
  - pain or swelling in the arm where the PICC catheter is inserted
  - redness or drainage at the insertion site
  - leaking
  - dressing is loose
- Flush the catheter as directed by your doctor or nurse. If you have resistance when flushing the catheter, stop. Check for kinks in the catheter. If there is still resistance or if you are unable to flush, call your doctor.

## Special Instructions or Questions:

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