Danbury Hospital

Danbury Hospital Patient Education Sheet

What is a PICC or Midline Catheter?

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PICC stands for Peripherally Inserted Central Venous Catheter. This is a special intravenous infusion catheter that is put into one of the veins near the bend of the elbow or higher up in the arm. It is then threaded to the largest vein in your body above your heart, called the Vena Cava. A Midline catheter is similar to a PICC, but it is shorter in length and is threaded into a large vein in your upper arm.

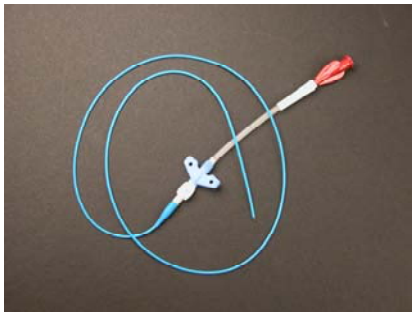
Your physician has ordered a PICC or Midline to give you medications directly into a vein (intravenously). A PICC, and in some situations a midline catheter, is also used as an access to get blood samples. The PICC/Midline allows you to get the medications you need and to have blood samples drawn without repeated needle sticks in your arms.

Who will insert my PICC/Midline catheter?

Usually the catheter is placed at the bedside by a PICC certified registered nurse. Occasionally, a PICC may need to be placed in the Interventional Radiology Department. An x-ray is done after your catheter is inserted to verify proper position.

What can I expect during my PICC/Midline insertion?

- In order to minimize any chance of infection, the nurse will prepare a sterile area to work from. The nurse will wear a sterile gown, mask, cap and gloves during the procedure.



- You may feel a little pain from the special needle used to help insert the catheter, but you should not feel anything while the catheter tubing is being placed in the vein.
- The amount of time to insert a PICC/Midline varies. Allow between 30 to 60 minutes. This includes the set-up time.

How do I take care of my PICC/Midline?

- While you are in the hospital, a specially trained registered nurse will change your dressing and monitor the insertion site for any problems.
- If you are discharged with a PICC/Midline in your arm, arrangements will be made for the care of your catheter as an outpatient.
- You need to keep the dressing clean, dry and intact. Your dressing has two important jobs:
    - To provide a germ-free environment for the catheter
    - To keep the catheter from moving or breaking.

- You will be given special instructions on how to keep your dressing dry during bathing and showering.
- A nurse will change your PICC dressing once a week or more often if necessary.
- The catheter should not interfere with your normal activities, but it is best to avoid strenuous activities, heavy lifting or repetitive movements.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR NURSE RIGHT AWAY IF YOU NOTICE:

- A lot of bleeding or drainage where the catheter comes out of your arm.
- Redness or swelling where the catheter comes out of your arm.
- Pain, soreness or swelling of the arm with the catheter.
- Pain or discomfort when intravenous solution fluids are put (infused) into your catheter.
- Chest pain or discomfort while your catheter is in place.
- Catheter movement either in or out of its place in your arm.
- If you experience fever, chills, and general weakness.
- If you have a catheter leak or accidentally break or damage the catheter, fold and tape the catheter between the break or leak and where the catheter comes out of your arm and call your physician or nurse.

Who will remove my PICC/Midline catheter?

When your therapy is completed, a PICC certified registered nurse will remove your catheter. This can be done before you leave the hospital or as an outpatient.

The PICC/Midline removal is usually easy and painless. After your catheter is removed, a sterile dressing will be placed over the site. You can remove the dressing after 24 hours.

Please report any discomfort, or signs of bleeding, bruising, redness, swelling and/or drainage where the catheter was removed.

Notes/Additional Information:

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