

## Who should I call if I have questions or problems?

- If you have questions about getting a PICC, please speak with your doctor.
- If you have questions or problems after your PICC has been inserted, please call:

**City of Hope Triage Nurse Call Center**  
**626-218-7133 • Available 24 hours**

# What is a **PICC?**



*This guide will help you learn more about getting a PICC as part of your care plan.*

Please talk to your health care team if you have any questions.



1500 E. Duarte Road, Duarte, CA 91010  
800-826-HOPE (4673)

CityofHope.org

20000N23207



## What is a PICC?

A PICC is a peripherally inserted central catheter. It is a small, flexible tube that is placed in a large vein inside of your upper arm. The PICC follows the pathway to the largest vessel above the heart, but does not enter the heart. The PICC does not limit any arm movement. Normal use is encouraged to help the flow of blood, but difficult or repeated movement should be avoided.

PICCs are used for long-term treatments, and may be used for up to a year. Medicines, chemotherapy, blood products, pain medication, fluids, antibiotics and alternative nutrition (also called total parenteral nutrition) may all be given through a PICC. Many of these products cannot be given through a regular IV in a small vein because a small vein can be damaged.

## What are the benefits of having a PICC?

- You don't need to be stuck many times with a needle to draw blood or start an IV.
- A PICC can be easily used for blood tests, fluids administration and medicines.
- You can go home with a PICC (your nurse will talk with you about proper care for the PICC at home or at clinic visits).

## What are possible complications of having a PICC?

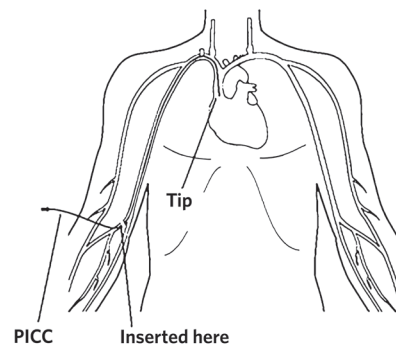
- Bruising, swelling or infection in the arm
- Damage to soft tissue and/or nerve during insertion
- Movement of the PICC from original location
- Occlusion (blocked PICC)
- Irritation or inflammation of the vein
- Blood clot in the vein
- Infection in the bloodstream or PICC

## What should I expect during and after the PICC insertion?

### During the procedure

A nurse who has special training will insert the PICC. You will be asked to lie down on a bed. Then, the nurse will use an ultrasound machine to check your veins and find the best place for your PICC. To prevent infection, the nurse will wear a gown, gloves, head cover and mask, and you will be covered with a large sterile drape.

After cleaning your arm, a numbing medication will be injected under your skin with a small needle. After the PICC is put in, the nurse will secure the PICC, then cover the site with a dressing to keep it clean and in place.



### After the procedure

Your cardiac rhythm (speed and pattern of your heartbeat) is used to make sure the tip of the PICC is in the right place. A chest X ray may also be taken, if needed.

After your PICC is inserted, your nurse will talk to you about how to care for the PICC and give you a guide book on dressing changes, site care and whom to call if problems occur.

The PICC may be used as soon as the tip location is confirmed.