



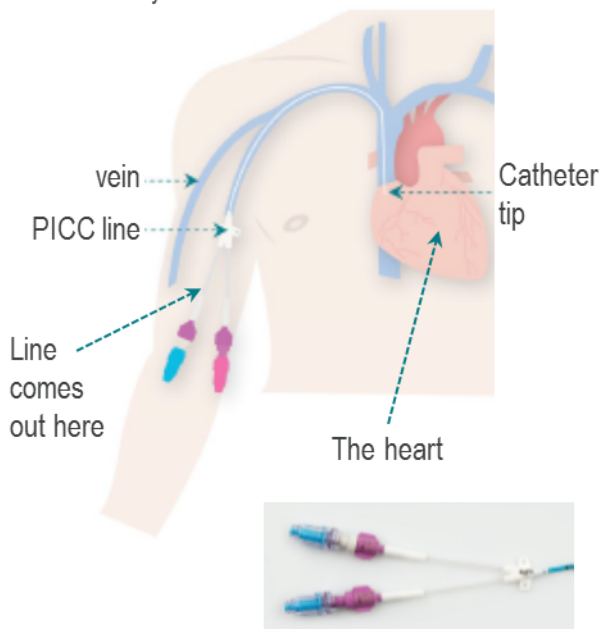
# Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Insertion Consumer Information Sheet – A guide for patient

## What is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

A Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) is a thin, soft, flexible tube that is inserted into a vein in the upper arm.

### A PICC line

The line is threaded through the vein until the end is near your heart



## Why do you need a PICC?

A PICC allows us to deliver fluids or medicine into your bloodstream without having to find a vein each time. It can also be used for taking blood samples without using a needle. Other people require a PICC because of the kind of treatment they are having such as chemotherapy or nutrition. Antibiotic treatment is often given at home via a PICC which reduces the amount of time someone needs to stay in hospital.

A PICC can stay in for a year, if required. It should be removed at the end of treatment or when you no longer need it. This can be done by one of the nurses at the hospital.

## How is the PICC inserted?

PICCs are inserted by a specialist nurse or doctors in the hospital. The procedure should be painless with the use of local anaesthetic to numb the area and minimise discomfort.

The PICC is inserted into an upper arm vein using a sterile technique with an ultrasound guided needle. The right arm is preferred if available. An x-ray is then done to confirm the PICC is in the correct position.

## How to care for your PICC

- Your PICC dressing must be kept dry.
- Use a plastic cover for showering.
- The PICC dressing will need to be changed once a week or anytime it becomes loose, soiled or wet. This is to prevent infection or movement of the PICC.
- The PICC will also be flushed and the cap changed once a week.
- If you are required to touch your PICC or dressing, wash your hands before and after touching.
- At any stage if you have **NOT** had your PICC dressing changed for more than a week, contact your Home Care Package Provider or hospital to arrange a dressing change.

Activities you should **NOT** do while you have a PICC include:

- contact sports
- lifting heavy weights or objects (no more than 2kg)
- repetitive movements i.e. golf or tennis.
- swimming
- avoid using sharp objects near your PICC line.

## Things to watch out for

Contact your Home Care Package Provider first, your GP or go to the Hospital Emergency Department if you have any of these:

- If you become unwell.
- Redness of skin, discharge (pus or clear fluid) around the line or arm, hot to touch around the PICC.

- Fever or you develop a temperature of 38 degree C or above.
- Develop chills, shiver or shakes.
- Swelling in the arm the PICC is inserted in, persistent ache or pain above the insertion site.
- Any leakage of IV fluid from around the PICC line insertion site.
- Develop chest pain, shortness of breath or fast heart rate.
- You experience pain or swelling in the neck or chest area.
- You notice more of your line is out of your arm than before.
- You hear a 'whooshing' sound in your ear on the same side as your PICC.
- There is damage to the PICC line.

## Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about PICCs please ask your nurse or doctor, or contact the Aboriginal Health Workers or Aboriginal Liaison Officers at your local hospital should you require further assistance.

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

A healthcare professional that visits your home is often provided through your Home Care Package or Commonwealth Home Support Program.

Acknowledgement: Original document – permission from Fiona Stanley Hospital.

