

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Care of the PICC at home

What is a PICC (Peripherally inserted central catheter)?

A PICC is a longer version of a cannula. It is inserted into a small vein in the arm, leg or scalp and then gently moved forward until the tip of the PICC is in a big vein close to the heart. A PICC is usually able to remain in these big veins for longer periods of time to receive intravenous medication at home.

What does a PICC look like?



PICC connected to an infusor



The PICC is secured using a clear dressing and a securement device. The dressing acts as a barrier to prevent infection and allows the area to remain clean and dry. The securement device prevents the PICC from being accidentally dislodged or removed. Tubifast may be applied over the PICC for support and comfort.

The PICC is checked by the HITH (hospital in the home) nurse at every home visit and the PICC will be removed on completion of treatment.

General care of the PICC line

- A PICC is looked after using a very strict technique to prevent infection. This involves careful hand washing and wearing gloves when connecting and disconnecting the infusion sets from the PICC and also during dressing changes.
- Make sure that the ends of the PICC, infusion sets and syringe tips do not touch a non-sterile surface.
- Ensure that the dressing covering the PICC is kept clean and dry at all times.

- When bathing your child ensure the PICC is kept out of the water to prevent the risk of infection. If showering cover the PICC with plastic gladwrap to prevent the line from getting wet. Tape each end of the gladwrap to ensure the dressing remains dry.
- Keep the PICC secure and regularly check the dressing to make sure it is not coming off. Never try to remove the dressing.
- Dressings are changed every 7 days. This involves carefully removing the old dressing and cleaning the skin around the PICC with antiseptic solution and applying a new clean dressing.
- Check the PICC regularly to ensure that the line is not kinked and the line outside the body has not changed length.
- Take care when dressing your child to ensure that the PICC line does not accidentally get removed.
- Ensure that your child does not participate in contact sports or vigorous play whilst undergoing treatment to avoid potential damage to the PICC.
- Do not allow anyone to touch the PICC.

When to seek help

If your child has any of the following problems, follow the instructions below and contact either the HITH nurse or your child's relevant after hours medical team immediately.

Problem	Management
Chest pain or difficulty breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clamp the PICC • Call the ambulance "000" • Lie your child on their left side with their head down
The PICC accidentally comes out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie your child down and apply firm pressure over the site with cotton wool or a clean disposable towel for 5 minutes to stop the bleeding. Then cover the site with the spare dressing
The Infusor becomes disconnected from the PICC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clamp the line, do not reconnect
The PICC breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the infusion • Using the clamp on the line, clamp above the break closest to the catheter insertion site (skin). If unable to clamp the line, bend the line above the break and tape the line firmly together. Cover with a gauze square or a clean disposable towel to keep clean. Secure the PICC with spare dressing
Your child develops fevers, swelling, redness or pain at the PICC entry site or up the arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please stop the infusor and clamp the line
Dressing loose, wet or dirty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not remove the dressing. Secure the dressing with spare dressing.
The PICC appears longer or shorter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure the PICC with spare dressing to prevent further movement
Leakage or drainage at the PICC site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop infusion and clamp the line

Contact details for HITH Service:

Westmead contact telephone numbers:

Contact Times: 7.30am to 9.30pm 7 days a week
Office: (02) 98453857
Morning nurse mobile: 0417226650
Afternoon nurse mobile: 0419226590

Randwick contact telephone numbers:

Contact times: 7.30am to 9.30pm 7 days a week
Office: (02) 93820888
Morning Nurse Mobile: 0418760411
Afternoon Nurse Mobile: 0409954567

After Hours: Please phone the Sydney Children's Hospital Westmead on 98450000 or the Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick on 93821111 and ask to speak to the Registrar on call for your child's consultant for further instructions.