

# **PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) Education Plan**

## **Getting Ready to Learn About PICCs**

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review the following information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your health. We may explain something more than once.

## **What I Need to Learn About PICCs**

By the time I leave the hospital; I will be able to tell the staff:

1. Why I need a PICC at home
2. Things I should do differently because I have a PICC
3. The purpose of the PICC dressing and the caps
4. What I need to look for if there is something wrong with my PICC and what to do about it
5. Who will be caring for my PICC at home

**The staff will use three questions and answers to teach me about my PICC:**

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show them what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about my PICC and what to do if I have problems.

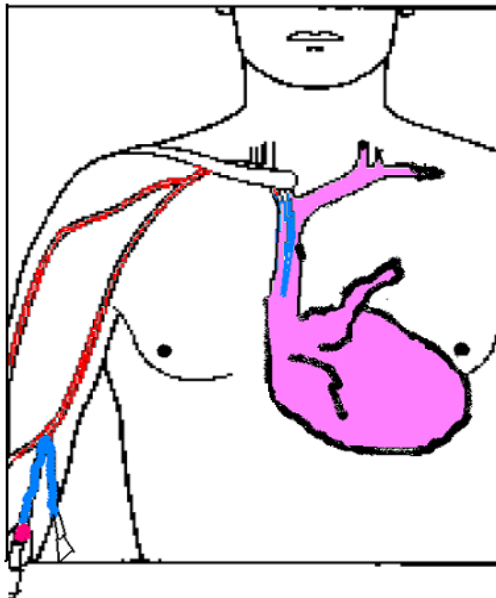
### **What is my main problem?**

I need to know what a PICC is, how to care for my PICC at home, and how to watch for complications at home.

### **What do I need to do?**

I will be able to tell the staff why I need a PICC at home.

- Understand that PICC stands for Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. It is a special type of tube that is inserted in my arm near the elbow. It is used to give me medicine and fluid. The tube is inserted into a blood vessel (called a vein) and threaded so that the tip is in a large blood vessel between my shoulder and my heart.



- Understand why I should get a PICC
  - Strong medicine, fluid and nutrients that need to be given into a blood vessel can be given through a PICC
  - The PICC can last a long time (from weeks to several months)
  - The PICC can be inserted by a nurse and doesn't require surgery (decreases the risk and the cost)
  - The PICC can sometimes be used to draw blood samples
  - I won't have to have as many needle 'pokes' if I have a PICC.

I will be able to tell the staff things I should do differently because I have a PICC.

- General care: Always wash my hands with soap and water before doing anything with my PICC. The area where I store my PICC supplies and do my PICC care should be free from dirt and dust
- Bathing: I will be able to take a bath or shower with my PICC in. I need to cover the PICC dressing with plastic wrap then tape the top and bottom edges of the wrap. This should keep the dressing from getting wet. If the dressing does get wet I should be sure to have the dressing changed as soon as possible.
- Using the arm with the PICC: Normal arm use is fine. I shouldn't do activities that will stress my arm such as playing basketball, walking with crutches or using the arm with the PICC to vacuum or mow the lawn. I should not lift more than about 10 pounds

I will be able to tell the staff the purpose of the PICC dressing and the caps.

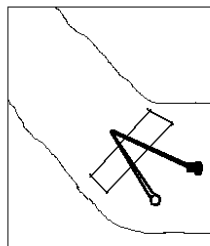
- Dressings: A dressing must always cover the area where the PICC goes into my skin. The dressing is changed weekly or if the edges or parts of the dressing are no longer tightly sticking to my skin. Never touch the area where the PICC enters my skin if the dressing is off. A nurse will change the dressing in the hospital, at my doctor's office, or at home. I should call my nurse or doctor if the dressing needs to be changed early because it is no longer tightly sticking to my skin
- Keeping my PICC open: The inside of my PICC has to be kept 'open' so that the medicines, fluid or nutrients can flow into the blood vessel. The PICC is kept open by filling it (called flushing) with normal saline or heparin when the PICC is not being used. The nurse will do this in the beginning. Later the nurse may teach me, or someone in my home, to flush the catheter
- Changing the cap: There is a cap at the end of the PICC. The cap is changed once a week. The nurse will change the cap when they do the dressing change

I will be able to tell the staff what I need to look for if there is something wrong with my PICC and what to do about it.

- Bleeding:** Blood under the dressing in the area where the PICC enters the skin. It is normal to have a small amount of bleeding right after the PICC is put in. The dressing will be changed about 24 hours after it has been put in
  - What should I watch for? Bleeding bigger than the size of a quarter after that first dressing change. Pain or swelling in the elbow area could mean there is bleeding inside (under the skin)
  - What should I do? Try pressing firmly with my fingertips at the site for 15 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop I should call my nurse or doctor. I should also call if I notice pain or swelling in the elbow
- PICC movement:** The PICC could slide in or out of my skin. I don't want it to slide in because it can cause infection. I don't want it to slide out because the end of the PICC will be in the wrong place. This will cause the medicine, fluid or nutrients to go into the wrong place
  - What should I watch for? If my PICC seems to be longer or shorter than it was when it was put in
  - What should I do? To keep my PICC from moving I should make sure the dressing is stuck to my skin well and the end is taped down. I should avoid activities that need more than normal arm movement. I should call my nurse or doctor if I notice the PICC length seems to have changed
- Infection:** This is when germs get into the skin around the PICC or into the blood stream.
  - What should I watch for? If there is an infection where the PICC goes into the skin I might see redness, swelling or drainage and it may become painful or tender. If a germ gets into my bloodstream I could get chills, fever or feel tired
  - What should I do? Infection is prevented in a number of ways. I should always wash my hands before doing anything with my PICC. I should follow the plan for dressing and cap changes. I should call my nurse or doctor if the dressing needs to be changed early because it is no longer tightly sticking to my skin I should clean the end of the PICC with betadine or other antiseptic for at least 30 seconds before putting anything into my PICC. I should

never touch the bare skin where my PICC goes in. I should never push the PICC back into my skin. I should call my nurse or doctor if I have any signs of infection

- Clogged PICC: A blood clot or a clump of the fluid that is running into the PICC that can cause the PICC to clog
  - What should I watch for? If my PICC is clogged I will find it is hard to flush or my medication or fluid will only drip very slowly. I don't want to push too hard because it can make the clog go into my body or the PICC can break
  - What should I do? I should never push hard when trying to flush my PICC. I should call my nurse or doctor if the PICC is clogged. The nurse may be able to put in a special medication that will open the PICC
- Blood Clot: Sometimes a blood clot can block the flow of blood in the blood vessel
  - What should I watch for? A blood clot can cause pain or swelling in my arm, shoulder, chest or back
  - What should I do? Call my nurse or doctor if I have any signs of a clot
- Tears or Breaks in the PICC: The PICC is very soft and stretches easily. Stretching the PICC or pushing too hard to get the fluid in can cause tears or breaks in the catheter
  - What should I watch for? I should watch for a break or for fluid leaking from the PICC when I flush it
  - What should I do? If the PICC tears or breaks, I should fold the PICC over on itself and tape it down. I should make sure the fold is between where the break or tear is and where the PICC enters the skin. I should call my nurse or doctor immediately.



- To help keep the PICC from a tear or break I need to make sure the PICC dressing is stuck on well and that the end is taped to the skin. I should never push hard to flush the PICC. I should never use scissors near the PICC.
  
- Air in the bloodstream: Air can get into the bloodstream if the PICC is broken or if any of the parts become loose. This is a very rare, but serious problem.
  - What should I watch for? I should watch for sudden shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, or cough.
  - What should I do? If this happens I need to quickly fold the PICC tubing over on itself and tape it (see above picture) so that no more air can enter. I should then lie down on my left side with my hips higher than my shoulders. I should call or have someone call 911.
  - To prevent this from happening I should make sure there is always a cap on the end of the PICC. I should keep the PICC dressing secure. I should never use scissors around my PICC.

I will be able to tell the staff who will be caring for my PICC at home

- This may be:
  - home health care nurse
  - my primary care doctor
  - an infusion center

**Why is this important to me?**

- To keep PICC complications from happening
- To know what to do if a complication is seen

As part of my care and to help me understand my PICC, I may receive:

- PICC Education Plan

## Personal PICC Information

I have a \_\_\_\_\_ brand PICC line inserted by

\_\_\_\_\_

My PICC has been threaded about \_\_\_\_\_cms and trimmed @

\_\_\_\_\_cms

My PICC is in the \_\_\_\_\_vein

My upper arm is \_\_\_\_\_cms around

My PICC placement is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Deep peripheral

\_\_\_\_\_ Central

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If I have any questions or problems I may call the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Home-care agency: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Infusion Center: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Vascular Access Specialist Team @ 513-3368 (digital pager)

If we do not call back within 30 minutes dial the hospital operator @ 341-7654 and ask to have the VAST/Hyperal nurse paged

Post this page in an easy to remember place such as on your refrigerator