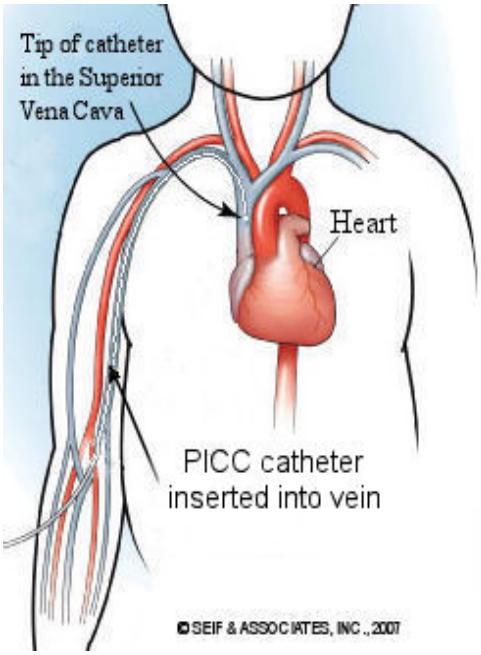
PICC Line

A PICC Line stands for *Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter*. It is a long, thin flexible tube that is normally inserted into a vein in your upper arm. The catheter is advanced until the tip reaches a very large vein called the *Superior Vena Cava* or SVC. The PICC line is placed in the SVC because the vein is very large and has a lot of blood flow within it. This allows medications and IV fluids to be quickly distributed to your body.

WHAT IS A PICC LINE USED FOR?

Your caregiver may want a PICC line placed for different reasons. Some of these include:

- Allows for long term IV therapy such as:
  - Antibiotic treatment.
  - Chemotherapy.
  - TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition).
- You need frequent blood draws.
- It is difficult to place a regular IV in you.



A PICC LINE HAS MANY BENEFITS

- A PICC line is placed by a specially trained nurse or doctor.
- If taken care of properly, a PICC line can remain in place for several months.
- Medication and PICC line care can be managed at home by a family member or home health care team.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Change the PICC dressing once a week or as instructed by your caregiver.
- Keep your PICC line dressing clean and dry to prevent infection. Ask your caregiver how to keep the PICC line dry so you can bath or swim.
- Check the insertion site often for redness, leaking, pain or swelling.
- Never pull on the catheter.
- Flush the PICC line as told by your caregiver.
- Avoid blood pressure checks on the arm with the PICC.
- If you are getting medicine to prevent blood clots, follow directions and keep appointments for blood work. **Report bleeding or easy bruising to your caregiver**.
- When you no longer need your PICC line, it is easily removed by a PICC nurse.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH A PICC LINE

Possible problems with a PICC line can occasionally occur. This may include:

- A clot can form at the tip of the PICC line. This can cause the PICC line to become clogged. A special "clot-busting" medicine can be inserted into the PICC to help break up the clot.
- Infection in the catheter or at the insertion site.
- Bleeding at the insertion site of the PICC line.
- A break or cut in the PICC line. It is important to not use scissors near the PICC.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- There is pus-like discharge, redness, swelling, or discomfort around where the catheter enters the skin.
- You cannot flush the catheter or it appears to be leaking or bleeding.
- You feel your heart "racing" or skipping beats.
- You develop shortness of breath.
- You develop chest pain.
- You develop chills or fever.

- The PICC line develops a hole or tear in it.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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