



When a suitable vein is found, your arm will be thoroughly cleaned with antiseptic solution and often covered with a sterile cloth. Your arm will be numbed for the procedure by an injection of local anaesthetic into the skin. When the skin is suitably numb, a needle will be inserted into the vein through the skin.

The PICC line itself is then fed through this needle into the vein and pushed along the vein until it reaches the correct position just inside the heart. The needle is then removed over the line leaving the line in place.

This part of the examination can sometimes be a bit uncomfortable. The discomfort at this stage should not last long. If you feel very uncomfortable, tell the staff.

The X-ray equipment will be used at this stage to confirm the line is in the correct position. A clear, sterile dressing will be applied over the part of the line that extends from the arm, to keep it in place and clean.

The procedure will normally take approximately ½ hour.

Aftercare

If you are on the ward, as an inpatient, the ward staff will look after the line and advise you on how to care for the PICC line. If you are to be discharged, after insertion of the PICC line, care of the line will be arranged with you by district nursing staff. Taking out the line is easier than having it put in and it only stays in as long as it is required. The Doctors who have asked for the line to be inserted will be able to tell you when it can be removed.

Finally

If you have any other questions, about any part of the procedure, the staff looking after you, are there to help. Make sure you are happy with what you should expect during the procedure and how to get information or advice after the procedure.

Contact details

The Radiology Department

Ulster Hospital

Upper Newtownards Road

Dundonald

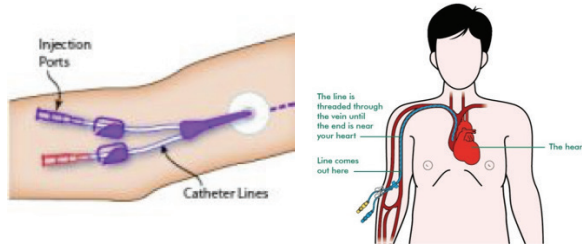
BT16 1RH

(028) 9055 0476

**Having a PICC line
inserted in the
Radiology
Department**

What is a PICC line?

A PICC line, **P**ERIPHERALLY **I**NSERTED **C**ENTRAL **C**ATHETER, is a long, thin, flexible tube that is inserted into a vein in your arm above your elbow.



What is a PICC line for?

A PICC line is used to administer medications that can only be given into veins. Sometimes it is used if there is difficulty getting a needle into your veins, although, sometimes certain medications can only be given through a PICC line.

Why do I need a PICC line? Who has decided that I need a PICC line?

The PICC line, when inserted, stays in place for as long as it is needed, meaning you don't have to get repeated injections when you need medications. It can also be used to take blood samples, give fluids and other drugs. You can go home with a PICC line in place and it can be left in place for months, if necessary. The Doctors, who are looking after you, have decided that this would be the best way to give you the medications you require, they also will decide how long the PICC line needs to stay in.

Are there any risks with inserting a PICC line?

Everyone's veins are different and it may be difficult in some patients, to find a suitable vein to put the PICC line through as they may be too small or too fragile.

The pathway of the vein from your arm to your heart can sometimes make it difficult to push the line through, if this is the case, a different vein may need to be selected and the line tried again.

The PICC line will sometimes go into the vein easily but then not follow the correct pathway to the heart. If this happens the line can be pulled back and moved. If it still does not position properly, the line may need to be removed and replaced.

A PICC line can sometimes become infected after insertion. The sterile technique used during insertion should prevent this and proper aftercare should also minimise infection risks. However, if redness, swelling or pain develops around the insertion site, sometimes accompanied by a discharge of discoloured fluid from the area and/or a high temperature (fever), then you should contact the staff involved in your care.

Is there any preparation for having a PICC line inserted?

On the day of the procedure it is advisable to wear loose fitting sleeves, so access to your arms is as easy as possible. You will be asked to sign a consent form before the procedure. If you have any allergies, make these known to the staff.

How is the PICC line inserted? Who puts in the line & where will I go?

A specially trained member of staff (Doctor, Nurse, Radiographer) will insert the PICC line. The procedure will normally be carried out in the Radiology (X-ray) Department so that the staff can use the X-ray equipment to screen or guide the insertion of the line. You will lie on the X-ray table with the chosen arm extended onto a pillow.

An ultrasound machine will be used first to locate a suitable vein in your arm. The member of staff carrying out the procedure will have put on a sterile (clean) gown and carried out a sterile hand washing technique in preparation. A sterile trolley will be set up with the necessary equipment. This is done by putting some gel on your arm and running a small hand held 'probe' over your upper arm.