PICC Line Insertion
(Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter)
Interventional Radiology

This leaflet provides information about the procedure, what to expect on the day, the potential risks and important information for afterwards.

Please note that this leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor. You should raise any questions you may have with the doctor who has referred you or with the health care professional who will be performing the procedure.

What is a PICC line?

A PICC line (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) is a long, thin flexible tube that is inserted into a vein in the upper arm and advanced so that the tip sits in a large vein near the heart.

A PICC line allows medications, fluids, nutrition or chemotherapy to be given directly into the bloodstream and can also be used for taking blood samples. PICC lines are suitable for patients who require intravenous treatment for weeks or months.

Why do I need a PICC line?

You may need a PICC line if:

- You require long-term intravenous medication (such as antibiotics or chemotherapy)
- You have difficult peripheral (arm) venous access
- You need frequent blood tests
- You require intravenous nutrition (TPN)
- You need a reliable central line without surgery

Tel: 01932 723470 **Email:** asp-tr.ir-referrals@nhs.net

How do I prepare for a PICC line insertion?

No special preparation is required.

The procedure will take place in the Interventional Radiology (IR), within the Radiology Department at St. Peter's Hospital.

You may eat and drink as normal unless advised otherwise.

You may be asked to have blood tests before the procedure

When you arrive, you may be given a hospital gown to change.

The health care professional will discuss the procedure with you; answer any questions you may have and ask you to sign the consent form if you are happy to proceed.

The procedure will be performed under local anaesthetic.

If you are feeling unwell closer to the day of the procedure, please let the team know.

How is a PICC line inserted?

You will lie comfortably on a procedure bed. The arm is positioned out to the side and cleaned with antiseptic solution. Local anaesthetic is injected to numb the area.

Ultrasound is used to identify a suitable vein in the upper arm. A small needle is inserted into the vein, followed by the PICC line, which is advanced into position. The length and position of the line are carefully measured.

The position of the PICC line tip is confirmed (using X-ray or ECG guidance). The line is then secured with a fixation device and covered with a sterile dressing.

The procedure usually takes 30 minutes.

What are the potential risks and complications of PICC line insertion?

PICC line insertion is a common and generally safe procedure. However, as with all medical procedures, there are some risks:

Pain or discomfort

- Mild pain or discomfort during or after the procedure is common and usually short-lived.
- This can be managed with simple pain relief.

Bruising or bleeding

- Mild bruising or bleeding at the insertion site can occur in up to 5-10% of patients and usually settles without treatment.

Infection

- Infection at the insertion site or in the bloodstream occurs in less than 1-2% of cases.
- Strict sterile technique is used to minimise this risk.
- A plastic sleeve will be provided by the department to prevent getting the dressing wet while showering.
- Infection may require antibiotics or removal of the line.

Line blockage or malfunction

- The line can occasionally become blocked or stop working properly.
- This can often be resolved with flushing or medication.

Thrombosis (blood clot)

- A blood clot in the vein of the arm can occur in around 2-5% of patients.
- Symptoms may include swelling, pain or redness of the arm and should be reported promptly.

Line movement or dislodgement

- The line may move from its original position, we recommend keeping the line covered with an arm sleeve (provided by the department)/
- This may require repositioning or replacement.

Injury to nearby structures

- Damage to nearby nerves or blood vessels is rare (<1%), as ultrasound guidance is used.

What happens afterwards?

After the procedure:

- The insertion site will be checked and a dressing applied
- You can usually go home shortly afterwards

The PICC line will require **weekly dressing changes and flushing**, usually performed by a health care professional.

When should I seek medical advice?

Contact your healthcare team urgently if you experience:

- Increasing pain, redness, swelling, or discharge at the insertion site
- Fever or chills
- Swelling or pain in the arm, neck, or shoulder
- Difficulty flushing the line or leakage from the line
- The line becomes loose or falls out

Follow-up arrangements and ongoing care of your PICC line will be discussed with your referring team or specialist nurses.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.

You can use Text Relay to turn telephone communications into text. Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC. You can also use Relay UK via Minicom or Uniphone.

اگر نیاز به ترجمه دارید، لطفا با شماره 01932 723553 تماس بگیرید.

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤਰਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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