Can I lead a normal life?

Having a PICC should not interfere with your life. However some of the drugs you need may mean you do not feel like certain social activities. You will be advised if these drugs may affect you.

Can I play sports?

Sports such as tennis, golf and hurling or vigorous gym exercises are discouraged. There is a risk that your PICC could become dislodged because of excessive upper body movement.

Can I go on holiday?

Please talk to your doctor before planning a trip abroad. It is possible to holiday at home and abroad with a PICC in place. However, you need to consider the type of treatment you are having, the duration and destination of your holiday and whether you have someone to help care for your PICC. If you do travel by air carry all your medication in your hand luggage.

If your child is discharged home with a PICC line and you have any concerns

In hours: Contact the ward/medical team you attend in OLCHC on 01/4558111 and ask the switch to contact your medical team or ward.

Out of hours, attend the Emergency department in your area or OLCHC to check your child.

Additional instructions

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What is a PICC Line?
- It is a small tube that is placed into a large vein, close to the heart (superior vena cava). It is usually inserted in the arm.
- The tube is made of polyurethane, which is a flexible material that softens at body temperature, making it a comfortable way of delivering treatment.
- It will be used to administer the medication / fluid therapy your infant/child needs.
- Once your PICC is inserted an x-ray will be performed to make sure the tube is in the correct position. The x-ray will be checked by the doctor prior to using the tube.
- The insertion of a PICC line is carried out by a specially trained nurse from the IV team or a consultant anesthetist.
- The insertion will take place in a clinical area. The patient will be lying down for the procedure and it will take approximately 40 minutes (it may take longer).

Will it be sore following insertion?
- Local anaesthetic is used to numb the skin at the insertion site.
- There may be slight discomfort following insertion. Slight swelling can occur in some patients. This is relieved by gentle exercise, paracetamol and or warm / cold packs.

PLEASE INFORM NURSING STAFF IF THERE IS ANY DISCOMFORT OR SWELLING.

Why do you need a PICC line?
- When a patient has poor venous access.
- Where there is frequent cannulation required.
- For intravenous treatment lasting longer than a week.
- Where a bolus administration of certain drugs deemed to be tough on smaller veins.

Advantages of PICC’s:
- Usually lasts longer than a peripheral cannula, requiring less venepuncture’s and preserves venous access.
- Suitable for all intravenous fluids and drugs.
- Reduced complications compared with central line placement e.g. Less scarring, does not require full anaesthetic for placement.
- Lower infection rates compared with central venous access devices.
- In some cases PICC’s can be used for blood sampling.

Disadvantages / possible complications of PICC’s:
- Occlusion / blockage can occur – to prevent this staff will flush the line frequently.
- Infection / Phlebitis – hand washing and use of aseptic non-touch technique as indicated are essential. Daily inspection of site and dressing for swelling, redness, pain or oozing.
- Damage / Displacement – preventable by use of recognised securement device, avoiding sharp objects near the device, suitable transparent dressing.
- Malposition – PICC may have to be adjusted into a better position.
- Arterial puncture – may cause bleeding / bruising – apply firm pressure.
- As with any other central device insertion complications may occur. These will be discussed with you during the decision to insert the PICC line is made with your consultant.

Signs to look for:
- Temperature 37.5 c or above, fever, chills generally unwell, this may indicate infection; however.
- Oozing from around the line.
- Cracks or leaks in the line.
- Pain, redness, and swelling around the site, in your neck / arm.

PLEASE INFORM YOUR NURSE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU OBSERVE ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Frequently asked questions:
Q. Can I eat or drink before having my PICC inserted?
A. Yes, you can eat and drink normally before having your PICC inserted. If you need to fast for this you will be informed.

Q. Can I have a bath / shower and swim?
A. We encourage people with PICC’s to take a shower rather than a bath but the PICC must be completely covered with a waterproof dressing e.g. cling film. Swimming is discouraged due to the risk of infection.