

LIVING WITH YOUR PERIPHERALLY INSERTED CENTRAL CATHETER

TRANSCRIPT

A peripherally inserted central catheter can be used for several weeks to months, if it is kept clean, infection-free and in good working order. To ensure it stays working safely, here are some things to keep in mind.

Do not use the arm your PICC line is in to check your blood pressure, or to have blood drawn with a regular needle.

Do not get your PICC line wet. Cover it with a plastic wrap when showering. Do not go swimming or take a tub bath while you have a PICC line.

Avoid contact sports. Wear loose clothing that does not rub or pull on your line.

And let all of your healthcare providers – including your dentist – know you have a PICC line before any appointments.

Every day, check your catheter for signs of infection. Look for increased pain; swelling, warmth or redness at the area; red streaks leading from your insertion site; or blood draining from the site. If you notice any of these signs, or if you develop a fever, you may have an infection that needs to be treated immediately.

All solutions and medications should go through your catheter easily. Never force solution through the tube. If you ever have trouble flushing the tube or pushing medication through the tube, contact your healthcare provider.

Never push or reposition the PICC line if you think it is coming out. Call your healthcare provider. If you notice a leak in your PICC line, contact your healthcare provider.

And if you have trouble breathing; have a fast or irregular pulse; notice swelling in your head, neck, shoulder or arm; feel chest pain; or notice a lot of bleeding; call 911 immediately. These can be signs of a serious complication. Get help right away.