

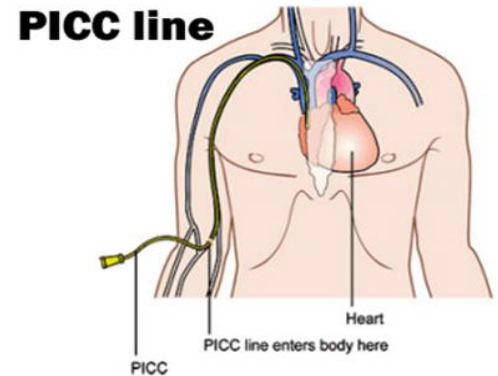
## Caring For Your Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)

### What is a PICC?

A PICC is a flexible plastic tube that is placed into a large vein in your arm. The tube extends into the superior vena cava (SVC). The SVC is a very large vein which leads to the heart. This allows your healthcare team to give you medicine, fluids and/or remove blood for laboratory testing.

### Why do you need a PICC at home?

You need a PICC at home because you require treatment for longer than 5 days. Your PICC line is temporary but can remain in place for up to several months.



### What should you DO at home?

- Keep the bandage dry
- Showers, rather than baths are recommended
- Cover it with a plastic bag or plastic wrap when there is a chance that the bandage will get wet (shower, wash dishes)
- Place surgical tape around the edges of the plastic to keep the PICC and bandage dry (you can purchase surgical tape at a local pharmacy or supermarket)
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before touching the tip of your PICC
- Loop extra-long tubing and secure it under your garment sleeve to avoid pulling it out by accident

### What should you AVOID at home?

- Removing the PICC or bandage
- Activities such as swimming, as this can expose your PICC to potential infection-causing germs
- Taking blood pressure readings on the same arm as your PICC
- Heavy lifting and vigorous activity involving the arm

### Directions for flushing your PICC

- A PICC line needs to be flushed daily and before/after each use
- Always use a new alcohol wipe before cleaning the hub (tip)
- Normal saline or heparin may be used for flushing your PICC. Your healthcare team will give you instructions.
- Your dressing will also need to be changed once a week. This is done at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey or by the visiting nurse. Do NOT attempt to change the dressing at home, as you may dislodge the PICC.

## **When should you call the healthcare team?**

If you notice the following, call Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey at 732-235-2465 immediately:

- Fever of 100.4° F or higher
- Chills
- Swelling
- Redness
- Pain
- Skin that is warm or hot to the touch
- Drainage at the insertion site
- If your PICC comes out, apply pressure with a clean gauze pad (or cloth, tissue, cotton ball, towel). Once it stops bleeding apply a new adhesive bandage.

**If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.**