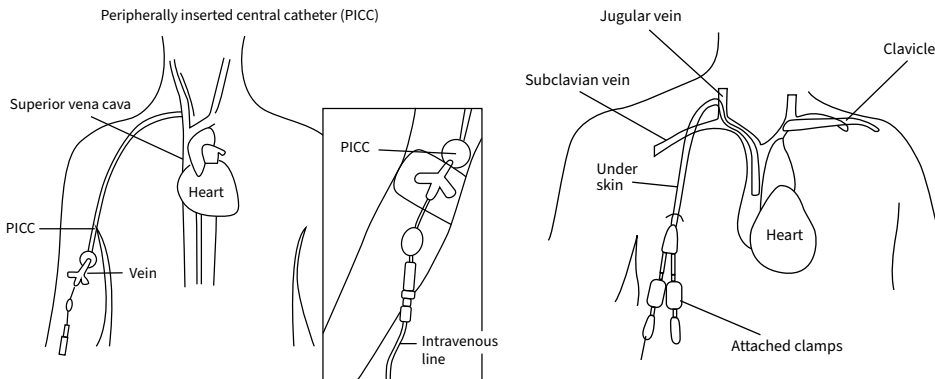


# PICC and Hickman FAQs

A PICC is a peripherally inserted central vascular device (CVAD or VAD), a type of long catheter often placed in the arm or, less commonly, in the neck. A Hickman is a small, soft, hollow, silicone tube that is placed into a large vein underneath the skin of the chest wall or, less commonly, in the thigh area. Both Hickman and PICC lines can be used to draw blood and give treatments, including chemotherapy, blood transfusions or antibiotics. Hickman and PICC lines are also used for stem cell transplants.



## COMMON QUESTIONS

### What should I expect with a newly inserted PICC/Hickman?

- Swelling, bruising, feeling tender at incision site

### How often are PICC and Hickman dressing changes done?

- For newly inserted PICCs and Hickmans, the dressing should be changed 24 hours after the insertion.
- After 24 hours, you can change the dressing every seven days unless it is loose, soiled or damp.
- If a gauze dressing is used, you can change the dressing every two days or more often if loose, soiled or damp.

### How often are claves/caps/tips/needleless connectors changed?

- Every seven days along with the dressing change

### Do all PICCs or Hickmans need the CHG (chlorhexidine) patch or CHG impregnated jelly?

- Unless allergic, all PICCs and Hickmans MUST have a CHG patch or jelly.

### What if I am allergic to the CHG patch?

- A Kerracel patch will be used instead of a CHG patch.
- Povidone iodine swabs are used to clean and prep skin before port access.

### Are the alcohol-filled green caps for PICCs and Hickmans available in the outpatient clinics?

- Green caps/disinfectant caps are not supplied in the outpatient clinics

## PICC ACCESS INFORMATION

### How much blood needs to be wasted/discarded for blood collection/samples?

- Between 5 to 10 ml (about 1 to 2 teaspoons)
- Between 6 to 10 ml if getting a nutrition solution through the port called total parenteral nutrition

## How much saline is flushed after blood collection and blood transfusion?

- 20 ml normal saline (two flushes)

## How often do PICCs and Hickmans need to be flushed?

- City of Hope® instructions for PICCs are to flush every week with 10 ml normal saline per lumen.
- City of Hope instructions for Hickmans are to flush with 10 ml normal saline every 24 hours.
- PICCs/Hickmans are flushed after blood draws, infusions and transfusions to make sure everything is working correctly.

## CHALLENGES THAT CAN HAPPEN

### What is a PICC/Hickman occlusion (blockage)?

- One of the most common complications that can happen is a blockage in the catheter (unable to irrigate/flush or draw blood). To clear the blockage, your nurse will give you Alteplase medication.
- Alteplase helps dissolve the fibrin sheath blockage that forms at the end of the catheter, which is what causes the blockage.
- Alteplase is given through the PICC or Hickman lumen for at least 30 minutes or up to two hours for the initial dose. There is a two dose maximum within 24 hours.

### What are some tips for getting your PICC/Hickman to work?

- There are times you may need to get your line to work by doing the following: apply a heat pack, lift your legs up, lay the head of the chair flat, cough, take a deep breath, turn the head to the opposite direction of the port, raise the arms above the head, lay on your side.

### When to call for help

- If catheter has been pulled out
- Pain at the site
- Any unusual drainage and/or excessive bleeding that exceeds the patch or CHG impregnated jelly
- Flu-like symptoms and fever
- Please follow all instructions given to you by your doctor and nurse, including knowing where to call for help. You may be instructed to call your doctor or the 24 hour Nursing Triage Call Center at 626-218-7133.

