

## Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Frequency Asked Questions

### Can I use the arm with the PICC in it?

Yes. It is important to keep moving by doing normal everyday tasks because it keeps the blood moving around the PICC.

- Stay away from repetitive movements with the PICC arm, such as jumping jacks, as it can cause the catheter to move.
- Do not use the arm with the PICC to lift items greater than 10 pounds, like a sack of potatoes.
- Do not allow anyone to take blood work or your blood pressure on the PICC arm.

### Will my arm hurt after the freezing wears off?

Each person's body is different in how they adapt to the PICC. Minor aching is normal.

- To help your vein relax and adapt to the PICC, place a heat pack or a wet towel inside a plastic bag on your upper arm. You can do this 4 times a day for 48 hours.
- If you have severe pain, or swelling in either your arm or hand, tell your care provider.

### Can I still shower or bathe with my PICC?

Yes, but you need to keep the PICC bandage dry. A moist bandage can cause an infection around or in the PICC. A moist bandage can become loose and cause the PICC to pull out too far.

- Keep the bandage dry by doing the following:
  1. Place a washcloth over the bandage to absorb any water that might leak through.
  2. Cover the PICC bandage with a plastic wrap or bag before you shower or bathe. Use waterproof tape around your arm above and below the PICC bandage.

### When should my bandage be changed?

The bandage is usually changed once a week, more often if needed.

If your first PICC bandage has gauze under it, your care provider changes the bandage the next day.

- If you notice any leakage of blood outside the bandage, contact your care provider.

### How long will the bleeding last?

It is common for the PICC site to bleed a small amount for 1 to 2 days after the insertion.

- Contact your care provider if the PICC site bleeds more than 1 teaspoon of fresh blood for 1 to 2 days after being put in place.

### What if the bandage becomes loose?

- If the PICC bandage becomes loose, secure it with tape and have the bandage changed by a care provider.
- To prevent the PICC bandage from coming off and to prevent infection, make sure the bandage is secure.

### What do I do if the catheter breaks off?

It is very rare for the catheter to break because of what the PICC is made of.

- If it does break (at home or in hospital), let your care provider know as soon as possible so it can be fixed.
- If it breaks while at home, gently clamp the catheter over the bandage using the emergency clamp provided. Then, go to the hospital.

**If you have any more questions, please ask your care provider.**