

When should I contact the clinic?

Contact the clinic if:

- ▶ The catheter site is red, warm, painful, or is oozing fluid
- ▶ Your bandage is coming off or has fluid/blood under the bandage
- ▶ You see the catheter tubing getting shorter or longer
- ▶ The catheter falls out. If this happens, immediately apply pressure to the area with a clean towel or gauze
- ▶ A hole or crack in the catheter is visible. Close the clamp on the catheter above the damaged area
- ▶ If the cap comes off, make sure the catheter clamp is closed
- ▶ You see a blister on the skin around catheter
- ▶ You have any questions or concerns about the catheter

When should I seek immediate care?

Seek care immediately or call 911 if:

- ▶ You have pain in your arm, neck, shoulder, or chest located on the side of the inserted catheter
- ▶ The catheter site turns cold or hot, changes in color, or is painful or numb
- ▶ You have chest pain or trouble breathing and it is getting worse.

If you have concerns with your catheter, please call the clinic that is administering treatments or the home health agency caring for your catheter.

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Catheter Care
Patient Information

What is a long-term catheter or infusion catheter (PICC/central line/implanted port), and why do I need it?

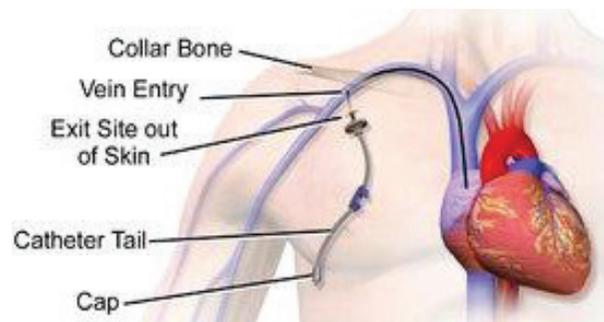
A peripherally inserted central line catheter (PICC line) is a thin, long flexible tube inserted into a vein in the upper arm.

A PICC line can be used only for infusion of medications or blood products.

A central catheter is a long flexible tube that is tunneled under the skin and inserted into a vein in the chest or neck.

An implanted port is a small medical appliance placed in a pocket made beneath the skin. A thin flexible tube is tunneled underneath the skin and connects the port to a large vein.

A central line or implanted port can be used for certain procedures as well as infusion of blood and medications.



Non-Tunneled Central Venous Access Device

What are the risks of a catheter?

The biggest risk of any of these catheters is infection. Other potential risks include a blood clot, a broken or moving catheter, and leaking of medication.

How can I prevent catheter (central line) infections?

A central line-associated bloodstream infection can be caused by bacteria getting into your blood. These types of infections can be serious and cause severe illness.

To help prevent infections:

- ▶ Wash your hands: Use soap and water to clean hands for 15 to 20 seconds. Clean your hands before and after touching the catheter or area around the catheter.
- ▶ Limit contact: Try to avoid handling or touching your catheter unless you have been given detailed instructions by a medical professional.
- ▶ Maintain clean skin: Dressings are changed weekly by a nurse. If the dressing is coming off, call your clinical department or home health agency to have the dressing changed by the nurse.
- ▶ Keep the catheter and dressing dry: The catheter dressing should never get wet.



- ▶ If the dressing gets slightly wet, pat it dry with a clean towel.

If the dressing is completely wet and coming off, call your clinical department.

- ▶ DO NOT go swimming or submerge your catheter under water, even in a bathtub.

TIP: *If you are taking a shower, ensure that the catheter site is completely covered. You can purchase a shower shield at local pharmacies to cover the catheter. You can also use clean plastic wrap and secure the edges with plastic tape. Avoid getting the catheter site directly in the stream of water.*