



Caring for your Catheter

Lifecath PICC



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Important Information

Your Lifecath PICC Information

Code number:

Length: Date of insertion:

In case of queries please contact:

Name:

Title:

Telephone Number:

Special Instructions

Your healthcare professional may ask you to help with the following procedures:

1. Dressing changes every days
(unless it becomes wet or falls off).
2. Your catheter should be flushed every days and after drug administration.
3. Your own instructions:

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Glossary of Terms

Catheter	A special plastic tube inserted into your arm, to deliver drugs and infusions straight into your vein.
Exit Site	Where the catheter enters your skin.
Phlebitis	Irritation to the vein and surrounding skin.
Extension	Tubing connected to the catheter to help with infusion of drugs and fluids.
Peripheral	Relating to, or situated near the surface of the body.
IV Drug Therapy	Intravenous drugs administered directly into the vein.
Polyurethane Catheter	A special plastic tube made of a soft material, inserted into your vein to deliver drugs and infusions.
Healthcare Professional	The doctor or nurse looking after your Lifecath PICC catheter.

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About PICC Lines

During your treatment you may need to have repeated blood samples, and be given drugs or fluids frequently or for an extended period. These are usually done via a vein in your arm, but inserting a needle or cannula each time can cause damage to your veins, which can be very painful for you.

To give you the best care, your healthcare professional has decided to use a PICC line, which can be left in place and used repeatedly. You will normally be given a PICC line when you need frequent doses, or if your treatment is expected to last 1 week or more. The PICC line will usually be connected to an extension set to deliver medication.

Your Catheter

You have been given a Lifecath PICC catheter. Lifecath PICC is made from polyurethane, which is a flexible material that softens at body temperature making it a comfortable way of delivering your treatment.

Your PICC line may be single or double lumen. This means that it has either one or two holes running the full length of the catheter.

A double lumen line will be used if you will need to have more than one infusion running at the same time and don't want the two liquids to mix in the tube, or if your nurse might need to take a blood sample while an infusion is being given.

Provided that your Lifecath PICC is correctly inserted and is cared for properly, it can be left in place as long as it is needed, until your treatment is complete.

A nine step handwashing technique was devised by Ayliffe et al (1978), and it is used regularly by healthcare professionals. Using it yourself may improve the care of your catheter. The technique uses soap or an antiseptic solution and running water. Each step consists of five strokes forward and five backward.

STEP TWO

Rub palm to palm.



STEP THREE

Right palm over back of left hand and left palm over back of right hand.



STEP FIVE

Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



STEP SIX

Wash each thumb by clapping and rotating in the palm of the opposite hand.

STEP EIGHT

Rinse hands under running water.

STEP NINE

Dry hands thoroughly.

Handwashing Technique

STEP ONE

Wet hands thoroughly before applying washing agent.



STEP FOUR

Palm to palm fingers interlaced.



STEP SEVEN

Rotational rubbing back and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



How is your PICC Line Inserted?

Your PICC will be inserted in hospital by a Nurse Specialist or Doctor. Local anaesthetic is used to numb the skin, and the PICC is inserted into a vein at your elbow, then fed in so that the tip is positioned near the heart. This allows your medication to mix more easily into your blood.

Once your PICC has been inserted, the nurse will flush the catheter with a solution to prevent clotting. The PICC will then be checked by X-ray to ensure that it is in the right place.

A clear sterile dressing will then be applied to protect the exit site and to help hold the catheter in place.



Caring for your Lifecath PICC at home

Depending on your clinician/nurse's recommendations, you may need to take care of your catheter once you return home. The following information will be useful, but you should always follow any instructions given to you by your healthcare professional.

Care of the exit site

Check the exit site for any swelling, redness or pain. The troubleshooting guide opposite will help, but if you are in any doubt you should contact your healthcare professional.

Soiled, wet or loose dressings

You can change the dressing yourself if you have been shown how, otherwise you should return to the hospital for the dressing to be changed.

Bathing and showers

You can bathe and shower while you have a Lifecath PICC line, but you must take care to keep the catheter and dressing completely dry. Cover the entire catheter and dressing with an additional waterproof dressing, and secure all the edges with tape. Ask your healthcare professional for any further recommendations.

Troubleshooting

Problems	Symptoms	What to do
Air entering the bloodstream	You experience shortness of breath, chest pain or coughing.	Stop infusion immediately. Position yourself on your left side with your head down. Inform Hospital and Emergency Services.
The catheter breaks or you accidentally cut the catheter	Blood leaking from catheter or extension.	Stop infusion, contact your healthcare professional.
Skin infection or soreness	You will notice redness, swelling and tenderness at catheter exit site.	Contact your healthcare professional. Always follow the correct Guidelines Procedure for handling and cleaning catheter, as instructed by your healthcare professional.
Catheter blocked / infusion stops	Drug or infusion will not flow through catheter.	Contact your healthcare professional. You may have a clot in the catheter. Your healthcare professional may infuse a drug to dissolve the clot or remove the catheter.
Phlebitis	Small area of redness can be seen around catheter exit site and radiating up the arm.	Contact your healthcare professional. Phlebitis can be successfully solved with early treatment.
Leaking of blood or fluid	Possible hole in catheter or extension.	Stop infusion and contact your healthcare professional immediately.

Notes

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