



## Useful information after PICC placement

Information for patients about  
the Health Hub

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**This leaflet is for patients who have a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC), also called a PICC line. A PICC is a long, thin tube that's inserted through a vein in your arm and passed through to the larger veins near your heart. It is used to give someone chemotherapy treatment or other medicines.**

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## **Referring you to the Health Hub**

During your first chemotherapy session you will be referred by your chemo nurse to the Health Hub in the community.

After that, a district nurse (DN) will call you to arrange some of the following appointments.

- A weekly PICC line flush. They will take blood samples prior to your planned chemo sessions, so don't forget your blood test form.
- Removal at home of a chemo pump, if necessary (not everyone has a pump, it depends on the type of treatment prescribed).
- GCSF injections, if required, at home.

## **Why do you have PICC line weekly care?**

When the PICC line is not being used, there is a slight risk of it becoming blocked. To stop this from happening, a small amount of **fluid is flushed** into the line using a syringe. This is usually done **once a week**.

The caps or bungs at the end of the line need to be changed each week to reduce the risk of infection. **The dressing also needs to be changed every week**. If it gets wet or starts to peel off, it should be changed sooner.

When you are at home, it is safe for you to have a shower or bath with your PICC line in, by using a waterproof cover to stop the line from getting wet. The waterproof cover will be provided for you.

On your first chemotherapy treatment, you will be referred by a nurse to the Health Hub. After that, a district nurse (DN) will contact you and arrange this for you:

- ✓ Appointments for weekly line care and blood test (prior to each chemotherapy treatment) at the **PICC Clinic**
- ✓ Appointment for pump removal if necessary at **home**
- ✓ Appointment for GCSF injections if needed at **home**

## How will I know if something is wrong with my PICC line?

Most PICC line insertions are trouble-free, but please contact us if you notice any of the following:

- **Infection alert signs:**
  - Redness, swelling or pain in the area
  - Discoloured fluid coming from the area
  - High temperature (fever, i.e. over 37.5 degrees)
- **Blood clots alert signs:**
  - Swelling, redness or tenderness in the hand, arm, armpit, chest area or up into the neck (same side as the PICC line)
  - Shortness of breath, or tightness in your chest
- **Skin reaction related to dressing or SecurAcath:**
  - Swelling, redness, tenderness, blistering at the insertion point

## Doing sport / activities with a PICC line

We encourage patients with a PICC line to do normal daily activities using both arms as usual. But there are some restrictions you should be aware of:

- Do not do strenuous activities or lift heavy objects for the first 48 hours after placing the catheter.
- Swimming or diving is not allowed.
- Rough or contact sports are not recommended as the catheter may move or be damaged.

## Contacting us

### **The Berkshire Integrated Hub (Health Hub)**

The Old Forge, 45-47 Peach Street, Wokingham RG40 1 XJ

Tel: 0300 365 1234 Email: [integratedhub@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:integratedhub@berkshire.nhs.uk)

### **King Edward Ward**

North Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

London Road Reading RG1 5AN

Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm Tel: 0118 322 7464

### **Adelaide Ward (out of hours only)**

Level 2 Battle Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

London Road Reading RG1 5AN

Tel: 0118 322 7471 / 7472

### **Reading Community Nursing PICC Clinic**

Building L11, University of Reading (London Road Campus)

Acacia Road (Off Redlands Road)

Reading RG1 5AQ

Tel: 07785 376494

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

Berkshire Cancer Centre, August 2021

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