

## Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Department

### Caring for your child's PICC line at home Information for Parents and Carers

#### What is a PICC line?

A PICC line (peripherally inserted central catheter) is a long, thin, flexible tube .

It is threaded into a vein in the arm until the tip sits in a large vein between the shoulder tip and the heart.



Photograph of a PICC line

#### Why is a PICC line used?

Your child may need a PICC line if they need:

- intravenous (IV) antibiotic treatment for longer than two weeks  
or
- their treatment is to be given constantly (this is called continuous infusion)

#### Looking after the PICC line at home

It is very important that the PICC line and dressing stays clean and dry as this will prevent infection. Bathe your child in a shallow bath and cover the dressing/bandage to protect from splashes. If the dressing does become wet – dry it with a clean towel.

Do not take your child swimming until the line comes out.

It is best if the PICC line can remain covered. Clothes with long sleeves are good for this and can help prevent the PICC line getting caught or pulled.

If the PICC line looks like it has come out, or has moved, tell nurse/local unit/OPAT team.

They will review the PICC line and may contact the OPAT (Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy) team for a line review at the hospital, to check that it can continue to be used.

#### Signs of Infection

The nurse or parent/carer (if you have been trained to do the IVs) will look at the child's PICC line at each dose.

In between these you should watch out for possible signs of infection – these include:

- Temperature (hot).
- Pain, heat or redness around the entry point of the line or up the arm.

## What happens if the PICC comes out?

If the PICC site bleeds when it comes out apply pressure for one minute and put a plaster on. Tell your nurse/local unit/OPAT team.

If you lose the PICC line overnight and your child is not on a continuous infusion you can wait until the morning to make contact.

The nurse will contact OPAT team who will make a decision about:

- replacing the line (you would need to come to hospital for this)  
or
- to change your child's treatment from IV to oral antibiotics.

If your child is on a continuous infusion that needs to be continued they will need to attend the hospital, and may be re-admitted.

## Can my child attend school or nursery?

If they are well enough this should be fine. Check with your school/nursery first – some schools may want to know a little bit about caring for the PICC line. We are happy to talk to the school with your permission – you or your nurses can contact the OPAT team to do this.

Your child can take part in most normal activities at school or nursery. However they should avoid vigorous exercising and contact sports such as rugby, hockey and water play at nursery.

## Who to contact for help or further information

The OPAT nurse can be contacted between 8.30am-4.00pm Monday - Friday for advice about treatment or lines: OPAT Office: 0151 228 4811 ext. 3251

If you can't contact the OPAT team call 0151 228 4811 and ask the operator to bleep the IV/OPAT team for you on bleep 652.

If you have a question or problem that cannot wait until the OPAT or Community Nursing Team are available contact the Accident and Emergency Department at Alder Hey or your local hospital.

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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