

Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC Line): Overview and Usefulness

A **PICC line** is a long, thin catheter inserted through a peripheral vein—usually in the upper arm—and advanced until the tip rests in a large vein near the heart (typically the superior vena cava). It is inserted under sterile conditions by trained professionals using ultrasound guidance.



Usefulness of a PICC Line:

- 1. Long-term IV Access:**
Ideal for patients needing prolonged intravenous (IV) therapy (weeks to months), such as antibiotics, chemotherapy, or total parenteral nutrition (TPN).
- 2. Reduced Need for Multiple Needle Sticks:**
Minimizes discomfort from repeated IV insertions, especially beneficial in patients with poor peripheral venous access.
- 3. Safe Administration of Irritant Drugs:**
Allows safe infusion of vesicant or irritant medications (e.g., chemotherapy), reducing the risk of vein damage compared to peripheral IVs.
- 4. Blood Sampling:**
Enables easy and frequent blood draws without repeated venipuncture.
- 5. Lower Infection Risk Than Some Central Lines:**
When maintained properly, PICC lines have a lower risk of infection compared to femoral or subclavian central lines.

Common Indications:

- Chemotherapy especially in cases of leukaemia where long duration of infusions required
- Long-term antibiotics (e.g., osteomyelitis, endocarditis)
- TPN
- Frequent blood transfusions or blood sampling

PICC lines offer a reliable, relatively low-risk method for central venous access, improving patient comfort and treatment efficiency in various clinical settings.

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