

Let's Talk About...

Peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) in a newborn

A peripherally inserted central catheter, or PICC [pik], is a **catheter** (long, flexible tube) inserted through a small vein and threaded into a larger vein. When the tube goes into a larger vein near the heart, it's called a **central line**.

Why does my baby need a PICC?

Your baby may need a PICC if :

- They'll need fluids, nutrition, or medicine through an IV (tiny tube into a vein) for several weeks.
- They need certain fluids and medicines that can only be given through a PICC line or central line.

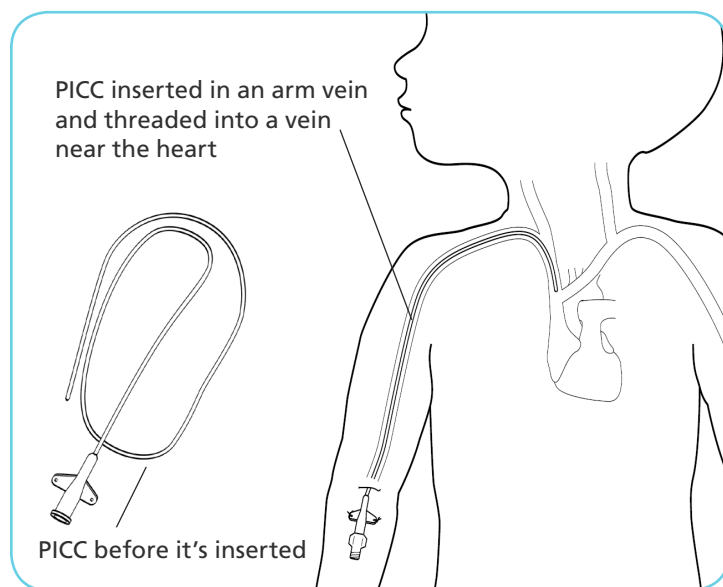
A PICC means your baby may not need a new IV each time they need treatment.

How is a PICC inserted?

To insert a PICC, a healthcare provider:

- May give your baby medicine to help them relax.
- Washes their hands well and wears a mask, cap, sterile gown, and sterile gloves to prevent infection.
- Cleans your baby's skin with an antiseptic (solution that prevents infection) and covers the insertion site with sterile cloths.
- Uses a small needle to insert the PICC through your baby's skin, into a vein, and up into the larger vein.

A healthcare provider takes an x-ray to make sure the PICC is in the right place and covers the PICC insertion site with a sterile bandage. It's normal to see a little blood here at first. Inserting the PICC usually takes 1 to 2 hours.



How will hospital staff care for my baby's PICC?

To care for your baby's PICC, healthcare providers will:

- Carefully hold or move your baby to prevent pulling on the PICC.
- Change the cap on the end of the PICC each week and clean the catheter opening with an antiseptic solution. *Note:* Only a doctor or nurse should change or open the cap on the end of the catheter.
- Wash their hands well and wear gloves and a mask when drawing blood from the PICC, giving medicine through a PICC, or changing the bandage that covers the insertion site (only if loose or soiled).
- Carefully handle medicines and fluids given through the PICC.

Talking with your baby's doctor about a PICC

The table below lists the potential benefits, risks, and alternatives for a PICC. Talk to your child's doctor about this process, and ask questions before scheduling the procedure.

Possible benefits	Risks and possible complications	Alternatives
<p>A PICC can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in place for days or weeks, as needed, to provide IV treatments • Cause less irritation and damage to the veins than multiple IVs and IV medicines would • Allow your baby to have a higher concentration of nutrients and medicine 	<p>Risks and possible problems with a PICC may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infection • Needing to insert the PICC again if the PICC end can't be positioned in the right place inside a vein • PICC moving outside the right position inside the vein • PICC breaking inside the vein • Fluid leaking outside the vein • Bleeding, irritation, and blood clot 	<p>PICC alternatives depend on your baby's needs and may include regular IVs or a central catheter (which must be inserted in an operating room).</p>



Questions for my baby's doctor

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