



Troubleshooting Your PICC Line



Here are some suggestions to help you if you run into problems with your child's PICC (Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter) line. If you have any questions about your PICC line, please ask your nurse. **Always wash your hands before you do anything with your PICC, IV tubing or dressing.**

What you will see	What is the problem?	What to do
Blood in the tubing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This may be caused by bending your arm or lifting.	<p>A small amount of blood in the tubing is not an emergency. Try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lying down or repositioning your arm.Make sure the IV tubing is not clamped and that the medication bag is not empty.Make sure all of the connections are tight and that the IV is not leaking. <p>If you still see blood in the tubing, STOP the infusion and call the nurse.</p>
An air bubble in the tubing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This may occur naturally from the medication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A small air bubble is not harmful.If there is a large amount of air in the tubing, STOP the infusion and call the nurse.
Resistance is felt when you are flushing your PICC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The PICC may be clamped or kinked.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Straighten any kinks or twists.If your PICC has clamps, make sure they are all open.Call your nurse.
You cannot draw blood back into the syringe before flushing your PICC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The PICC may be clamped or kinked.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Straighten any kinks or twists.If your PICC has clamps, make sure they are all open.Ask the child to cough, bearing down, raise their

		<p>arm and repositioning. Crying can also create the same bearing down effect.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt again to draw blood back into the syringe. If you are still unable to draw blood back into the syringe, DO NOT use your PICC. Call your nurse.
Tubing outside of the body is longer than it was before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may indicate that the catheter has moved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO NOT use your PICC. Tape the catheter in place. Call your nurse.
The PICC falls or is pulled out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central line is not in the skin anymore. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Apply pressure to the exit site with a sterile gauze dressing for at least 5 minutes, or as long as it is bleeding. Tape gauze in place. Call your nurse immediately.
Injection cap falls off or is missing from the end of the PICC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cap is not tight, or The cap has cracked. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If your PICC has a clamp, make sure that the clamp is closed. Clean the end of the PICC with an alcohol pad, scrubbing vigorously. Allow the alcohol to dry for at least 30 seconds. Screw a new injection cap securely onto the open end of the catheter. If you do not have a new injection cap, cover the catheter end with sterile gauze. Tape the gauze into place. Call your nurse.
A hole or crack in the catheter; or, the PICC is accidentally cut.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your PICC is damaged. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately clamp or pinch, by folding the tubing, the catheter between the damage and where the PICC enters your child's body. Cover the hole, crack or open end with a sterile gauze. Tape the gauze in place. Go to the nearest Emergency Room or call 911.

Nurse's name and phone number:
