

# Caring for your child's CVL or PICC at home

## What is a CVL or PICC?

Central Venous Lines (CVL) or Peripherally inserted central catheters (PICC) are used over a long period of time to give chemotherapy, blood products, nutrition, fluids, antibiotics, and other medications. These lines can also be used to take blood samples.

A CVL or PICC is placed through the skin into a vein leading to the heart. It can be placed usually in the chest or arm.



## Caring for a CVL or PICC

Your child can go home with a CVL or PICC in place. You will need to care for it at home by following the below steps:

- Dressing and bungs to be replaced every 7 days.
- A transparent dressing is preferred and acts to secure the line to your child's chest/arm. It

allows for visual inspection of the site. If the edges of the dressing are lifting this requires immediate medical attention.

- If your child has a skin reaction (eg. redness, itchiness, etc) please let your nurse know, as this can cause damage to the skin.
- If a gauze dressing is used it is required to be changed every 2 days.

## Preventing CVL/PICC problems

- Anyone caring for your child will need to learn CVL/PICC safety and emergency care.
- Keep the CVL/PICC dry and protected during bathing. For extra protection you can cover it with cling wrap or a plastic bag. Do not go swimming or put it under water.
- Never use scissors near the CVL/PICC or dressing.
- Avoid pulls, knocks or tugs on the tubing and take extra care when removing clothing.
- Avoid lifting under the arms for 2 months after the CVL/PICC is placed.

## CVL/PICC emergency management

### What to do if my child's CVL/PICC breaks at home?

- Don't panic. Keep your child calm.
- Use the line clamp to clamp the tube or tie the remaining tubing into a knot.
- If there is insufficient length to tie a knot, use a piece of dental floss or similar, to tie a firm knot around the tube.
- Go to the emergency department for review and management. They can contact the Children's Ward nurses if required.



- If you are unable to secure the end of the tubing, apply firm pressure over the area where the CVL/PICC exits the skin and call 000.
- Do not give your child anything to eat or drink until seen by medical staff.
- If there is enough length of tubing remaining the hospital staff may attempt to repair the CVL (this is not applicable for a PICC – as a new one will need to be inserted).

#### **What do I do if the bung comes off my child's CVL or PICC?**

- Don't panic. Keep your child calm.
- If there is a clamp on the central line close the clamp and cover the end with clean gauze or a clean tissue. Go to the emergency department for review and management.

#### **What to do if my child's CVL or PICC falls out or is pulled out accidentally?**

- Don't panic. Keep your child calm
- If there is bleeding from the wound cover it with a clean towel and place firm pressure over the site
- Go to the emergency department for review and management. They can contact the Children's Ward nurses if required.
- If bleeding is extensive i.e. it does not stop after 10 minutes or blood continues to soak the towel despite pressure call 000 for an ambulance.
- Do not give your child anything to eat or drink until seen by medical staff.

## **Signs and symptoms of infection**

### **Fever**

Any fever greater than 38.5 degrees OR 38 degrees TWICE (measured 1 hour apart).

### **Sweating, shivering or fever**

Sweating or shivering, complaining of feeling hot or cold or flushed appearance, can indicate an infection even if there is no fever.

If your child develops a fever, shivers or chills after flushing the CVL/PICC this should be reported immediately as it may indicate an infection in the line.

### **Redness, swelling or site hot to touch**

Please inform your treating hospital of any redness, swelling, discomfort at or around the CVL/PICC. Or the site is hot to touch.

## **If your child is really sick call an ambulance immediately 000.**

If you have any concerns, during office hours contact:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number:** \_\_\_\_\_



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