

## Patient information

### Central Venous Catheter Central Line and PICC Line

#### Critical Care Department

#### What is it?

A central venous catheter (CVC) is a thin plastic tube inserted into a large vein close to the heart for the administration of powerful medications and also to monitor pressures within the blood vessels.



#### Why is it being done?

These lines allow us to give powerful medications, monitor the pressures inside the blood vessels, and allow us to give large volumes of fluids rapidly and safely.

They also are used to feed patients who can't be fed via the stomach (known as TPN).

#### How is the line inserted?

Doctors insert these lines under sterile conditions. Most often, they are inserted by locating the blood vessel with the help of a scanner (ultrasound).

While inserting the line we take precautions to reduce the chances of damage to surrounding structures or the blood vessels themselves.

#### Where are the lines sited?

The commonest location is in the neck (jugular vein)

We may also place them in various other locations such as under or above the collarbone (subclavian vein), in the groin (femoral vein) and in the elbow (antecubital vein).

### **How long do they stay in place?**

The central lines may stay in place for about five-ten days (occasionally longer).

Lines are reviewed on a daily basis and are removed as soon as they are not essential for the safe care of the patient.

### **What are the risks?**

Like all the procedures carried out in the critical care department, these lines carry a small risk of bleeding or infection or damage to other surrounding structures such as an artery.

Very rarely, damage to an artery can cause serious complications such as a stroke, bleeding and lack of blood supply to a limb.

The procedure of insertion of jugular and subclavian catheters may also occasionally damage the lung resulting in lung collapse.

Chest X-rays are routinely done to check for any complications.

### **What are PICC lines?**

PICC lines are lines inserted at the elbow.

They are special long lines that can be kept in place for much longer when we have to give antibiotics or drip feed over a longer period of time.

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Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your Outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

### **Further information**

#### **For Further Information Please contact below**

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**Review Date: May 2026**

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