



Madison County EMS



PICC Line Access

A Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC line) is a common method of maintaining long-term central venous access in the chronically ill patient. PICC lines are typically inserted into the antecubital fossa, and then threaded into central circulation. After use, they are often flushed with Heparin, so that they do not clot off. It is for this reason that it is imperative to aspirate a PICC line before use.

Indications for Access

1. For the patient in extremis or cardiac arrest, a PICC line can be accessed prior to a peripheral IV attempt.
2. For the urgent patient in whom IV access is required for significant intervention, one peripheral IV attempt must be made prior to accessing the PICC line.

Contraindications

1. There is any possibility that the catheter you wish to access is a dialysis catheter.
2. You are unable to aspirate or flush through the catheter.
3. The catheter is located in any place other than the patient's arm.

Procedure

1. Wash your hands and apply nonsterile gloves.
2. Using three alcohol swabs, cleanse the end of the catheter and allow to dry.
3. If the cap is needleless, attach a 30 mL syringe to the cap. If it is not, remove the cap and, without touching the end of the catheter to any surface, quickly attach the syringe.
4. Unlock the clamp prior to aspirating.
5. Using gentle, even back pressure, withdraw 10 mL of blood from each port. Dispose of the syringe in a sharps box.
6. Flush each port with 10cc of NS. If you encounter any difficulties aspirating or flushing, inspect the catheter for kinks. You might ask the patient to cough, take a deep breath, shrug his shoulders or turn his head to one side or the other. If you still encounter difficulty aspirating or flushing after using these techniques, do not use the catheter.
7. If the line is patent, connect the IV line to the catheter, and infuse NS or other medications as appropriate.
8. Leave the unused port clamped with a PRN cap over the port.