Central Venous Access Lines
Tunneled Intravascular Catheter (TICC)
Central Venous Access Lines

A central line is a general term for an intravenous catheter whose tip ends in a large blood vessel, usually the superior vena cava, close to the right atrium of the heart.

Central lines are used for patients that require IVs for a longer period of time, frequent blood work, or medications that can cause trauma to the smaller veins.

The access device your doctor has selected for you is called a Tunneled Intravascular Central Catheter, or TICC line, or Hickman line.

- This is a catheter that is inserted typically in the chest and then threaded through a “tunnel” of tissue until it enters the vein. This helps anchor the catheter. The catheter is a hollow tube made of a soft silicone material. It has an opening called a lumen. The TICC may have 1, 2, or 3 lumens.
- A TICC can be used to give intravenous fluids, medications, blood products, nutrition, and to take blood samples. Blood samples can only be taken by nurses.
- A TICC can be left in for months to several years.

Looking After Your IV Access Device

You are taught how to flush your IV access device before and after giving all medication with a sterile salt solution called “saline” or normal saline. This fills the access cap and tubing with saline, which prevents the device from plugging.
Protect Your IV Access Device

Before touching any IV supplies:

- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Dry your hands thoroughly.
- Keep your IV access device and site covered with a dressing and gauze or netting (provided by Home Care) to avoid catching or bumping it.
- Ask your nurse for advice about bathing.

Troubleshooting

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<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>What To Do</th>
<th>How To Avoid It</th>
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<td>Unable to flush IV access device using gentle pressure.</td>
<td><strong>Do not</strong> use extra pressure. Call the Home Care IV coordinator for assistance.</td>
<td>Flush your access device with saline before and after each medication.</td>
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<td>Leaking, swelling, pain, or redness at the site of your IV access device.</td>
<td>Stop the treatment if medication is running or you are pushing in saline. Call the Home Care IV coordinator for assistance.</td>
<td>Flush your access device with saline after each medication. Check your IV site to be sure the dressing or tape is secure.</td>
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<td>No Blood Return during pre-flush for PICC, TICC or PORT.</td>
<td>Reposition your body, move your arm, cough and try again. If there continues to be no blood return, call the Home Care IV coordinator for assistance.</td>
<td>Flush your access device with saline after each medication.</td>
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| Cap or extension tubing is loose or has come off. | **For loose cap:** Clean connection with alcohol Gently tighten access device clockwise.  

**For IV Access Device that has come loose or come off**  
Call the Home Care IV coordinator for assistance. | Check your access device at times to make sure it is secure. Avoid bumping your IV access device/site. Protect your IV access device by covering with a dressing or gauze when not in use. |

Photos courtesy of RQHR Medical Media Department.