

Patient recall on PICC lines

Questions and Answers

Queensland Health is following up on children who have had a PICC line inserted during hospital treatment. There may be some potential complications with a particular device. Here is some further information if you think your child may have had this device inserted.

Am I affected by this recall?

You or your child may be affected if you/they are:

- Less than 16 years of age;
- Have been in hospital some time or over the past two years; and
- Have had a drip for long term medication inserted into the vein.

My child was in hospital and had a drip/needle in their arm – will they be affected?

Most children who require medication or fluids through a drip will **not** be affected by this recall.

The recall **only** applies to a special drip called a PICC line.

How will I know if my child had a PICC line?

A PICC (Peripheral Inserted Central Catheter) line is a long hollow catheter (tube) which is inserted into a vein mostly **at the elbow** or occasionally in **the ankle** of a patient which then tracks up to the large veins close to the heart and is used to deliver antibiotics and other drugs or fluids to the patient.

If a child has been in only overnight for a relatively minor condition or routine surgery, or if they had a drip inserted in the hand or forearm, it is very unlikely that a PICC line was used in their treatment.

Anyone concerned should phone the 1800 509220 and tell the operators their child's name and age, which hospital they were in, when they were admitted, and details of their condition.

What is a PICC line used for?

A PICC is not routinely used. It is only used to administer intravenous antibiotics, chemotherapy and other treatment for serious conditions such as cancer or cystic fibrosis.

There is a photo of a PICC line on the Queensland Health website at www.health.qld.gov.au. Anyone who is concerned should phone 1800 509220.

What is Queensland Health doing to find out if there are children with metal or wire in their body?

Every hospital in Queensland has been notified of this problem. They are currently reviewing patient records, including Xrays, to determine which patients need to be recalled for further investigation.

If you are called for further investigation, this does not mean that your child has wire in their body. You may be requested to attend hospital for an Xray to confirm if anything further needs to be done.

How do we find out if there is some metal or wire in their body?

The only way to find out if wire has been left after removal of the PICC line is to view an XRay.

If wire is found in my child's body, what will happen?

The wire can usually be successfully removed without the need for surgery. If a procedure is required, details will be discussed with you and your child.

What happens after you take my details when I call the Helpline?

Your details will be sent on to the relevant hospital. This will dovetail with the work already under way in Queensland hospitals to identify children who have had a PICC line in the past two years.

If we have taken your details on the Helpline, you will receive a telephone call within seven days to advise of any need for further investigations.

Are there any health effects for my child?

Queensland Health is not aware of any child who has suffered any long-term harm because of this issue.

Should I take my child to an emergency department or GP straight away? I don't want them to have metal in their body. What should I do?

An emergency department or general practitioner is unlikely to be able to help with this as it is a special issue. Call the Helpline on 1800 509 220 and provide your details to the operator.