



PICC Line for Lyme Disease

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November 2012 - Some people with Lyme disease are having their antibiotics delivered through a PICC line. Is treatment using a PICC line for lyme right for you? What should you know before choosing a PICC line to receive your antibiotic treatment for Lyme disease?

PICC stands for “peripherally inserted central catheter”. It is a long, thin and flexible plastic tube (catheter) that is inserted into a large vein in the arm, then slid in the vein until its tip reaches a large vein above the heart, in order to obtain intravenous access. Guided by ultrasound technology, a specially trained healthcare professional is able to properly and effectively insert the PICC line. A chest x-ray is then performed to confirm that the catheter is in the right place.

There are several advantages of choosing a PICC line:

Increases patient comfort

PICC lines can be used long term, the access line can remain in place and used as needed, for up to one year. This eliminates the need for the patient to come into the office or hospital and have an IV started every day for their treatment. If the PICC line has to be removed, it takes only few minutes to complete its removal, and this procedure can be done outside the hospital, by a trained nurse.

Many uses

PICC line can be used for a variety of treatments. If a patient needs long term intravenous treatment (for example with antibiotics for lyme), this special catheter may be the ideal solution. Patients who need TPN (total parenteral nutrition- when all the nutrients are received via catheter, not from eating) can also use PICC line for this purpose. Individuals who receive chemo therapy, painkillers, those who need to have drawn blood samples for lab analysis can also use this catheter.

Multiple lines

Sometimes the PICC line has two or three lumens. Lumens are essentially different ports that allow different treatments to be given simultaneously. At the end of each lumen there is a cap that can be easily attached to a drip or syringe, and a clamp offers the option to close and open the PICC line as needed.

Decreased risk of infections

Before each PICC line is inserted, the area is cleaned with a solution called Chloraprep using strict sterile techniques. In addition, the site of insertion (upper arm) is typically cleaner than other sites used by other catheters (such as groins and neck), thus the risk of infection is even lower. In addition, PICC line offers long term access to the veins, so there is no need to insert multiple lines in different places therefore the risk of contamination with bacteria from changing insertion sites is therefore avoided.

PICC line is a convenient and safe alternative to conventional catheters, however, it is not suitable for everyone. Although it has an excellent safety profile, compared with other lines, PICC can also cause air embolism, nerve injury, inflammation of the vein or it can become displaced. The use of PICC line should be discussed in detail with your healthcare professional and all the safety techniques should be rigorously followed.

References:

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