What is a PICC line?
A PICC line is a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter. A PICC line is a long, soft plastic tube placed into a large vein near the bend in your elbow or occasionally in the inner thigh above the knee. The nurse or doctor uses an ultrasound machine to see the vein to place the catheter. The catheter is guided into place in a vein near the heart.

What is a PICC line used for?
- To lessen the discomfort from being stuck for frequent intravenous (IV) catheter: With some medical conditions, such as a severe infection, patients may need to receive long term (greater than 1 week) intravenous (IV) antibiotics. A PICC line may be recommended because it can stay in for a long period of time so the patient can receive long term medications.
- To receive strong medications and/or concentrated total parenteral nutrition (TPN) without any damage to the patient’s blood vessels: In some medical conditions, it is necessary for patients to take strong medications/intravenous fluids that may be irritating to their veins. A PICC line may be recommended because it sits in a big vein where there is a large volume of blood flow. Through this PICC line, the patient can receive strong medications and/or concentrated intravenous nutritional fluid (TPN) and minimize damage to the blood vessels.
• **To continue therapy at home with safe care of the PICC line:** Some patients may need to continue intravenous (IV) medications at home when their condition is stable enough to leave the hospital setting. A PICC line may be recommended because it will allow the patient to continue therapy at home.

• **To avoid needle sticks for blood tests with a PICC line:** Some patients may need frequent blood sampling for lab tests. Depending on the type of PICC line, blood samples can be collected from the PICC line and needle sticks avoided.

**Where does the PICC line procedure take place?**
The PICC line procedure is done in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit or in the Batson Operating Room.

**How long does the PICC line procedure take?**
The procedure takes from 1 to 2 hours to complete.

**Does the PICC line procedure cause pain or discomfort?**
A PICC line insertion does cause discomfort and pain similar to a regular IV insertion. Different methods are used to minimize or eliminate the patient’s pain and discomfort:

• An ultrasound machine is used before the PICC procedure to locate and mark the vein. The ultrasound machine is used to guide the needle into the vein during the procedure. This eliminates blind needle sticks.

• A skin numbing cream is applied about 30 to 60 minutes before the procedure on areas around the marked vein(s). This cream helps to numb the area where the needle stick occurs.

• During the procedure, Lidocaine will be used to numb the skin around the insertion site for the catheter placement. Lidocaine stings for a few seconds when inserted but then the area will quickly become numb.