

# Vascular Access Devices

## EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Vascular access devices allow for repeated, long-term venous access. A peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) is a thin, flexible catheter that is inserted into a vein in the arm and advanced to a central vein near the heart for medication or fluid administration. A Port consists of a catheter threaded into a large vein near the heart and attached to a port under the skin in the chest. The Port is then accessed as needed using a special needle inserted through the skin. As implanted medical devices, all vascular access devices require monitoring for device malfunction, failure, and infection. Manufacturer guidelines should be followed for safety restrictions or precautions specific to the device. Damage to or removal of the line can be a life-threatening emergency.

## WARNING SIGNS

- Catheter is dislodged or pulled out
- Catheter is broken, leaking
- Bleeding
- Port appears to have moved or shifted under the skin
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Headache

## ESSENTIAL STEPS

1. Do not leave the student unattended.
2. Contact the school nurse/health room.
3. If the catheter is broken or leaking, clamp the tubing above the break, between the break and the chest.
4. Position the child on the left side to prevent an air bubble from entering the heart.
5. If the catheter dislodges, apply direct pressure and cover with a pressure dressing.
6. Call 911.