Removing a PICC

Who Can Remove PICCs?
Any qualified nurse who follows these guidelines.

Oncology / Haematology please note
Whenever you remove a PICC please fill out an audit card: see right. If you can’t find the patient’s original card, use a blank card which is available in your ward / department.

Procedure:
• Patient should be sitting/lying with the exit site below the level of the heart (this will prevent air embolism)
• Remove the dressing & any stitches. (Take swab if signs of infection)
• Pull PICC out slowly and gently an inch or two at a time. As each inch goes by, change the position of your hand so that your fingers are close to the exit site. This will reduce the likelihood of the catheter breaking.
• If you meet resistance, STOP. Resistance may be due to venospasm. If this happens, apply warm packs to the patient’s arm for about 5 minutes before resuming.
• Once PICC is out, apply pressure to exit site with sterile gauze for 3 minutes.
• If systemic infection is suspected, use sterile scissors to cut off the tip of the catheter and without contaminating it drop it into a dry sterile specimen pot. Send it to microbiology for culture.
• Apply sterile occlusive dressing to prevent air from entering the venous system.
• Keep wound dry for 1 to 2 days or until healed

(source: UCLH Central Venous Catheter Care Guidelines)