

Vascular ultrasound

CONFIRMING CENTRAL LINE PLACEMENT

Ultrasound allows rapid confirmation of an adequate central line placement, facilitating immediate use of the line in a critically ill patient.

Technique

- Place the line per standard protocol.
- Obtain an echo window of the heart. The subxiphoid works well for this purpose.
- Instill 5–10 mL saline into the line.

For an internal jugular or subclavian line, visualization of swirling fluid in the right side of the heart in < 2 seconds indicates the line is well positioned.



Safety

Check the lungs for evidence of pneumothorax.

If no flush is seen, check the cannulated vessel to ensure the catheter is visible. In addition, check the contralateral vessels to ensure there is no misplacement of the line.