

Check your fistula daily

Feel for buzz/thrill twice daily once in the morning and once at night.

Report any changes to the Vascular team or the Dialysis staff as soon as possible.

Dialysis AV Fistula or Graft

Information for Patients and Carers

Department of Renal Medicine

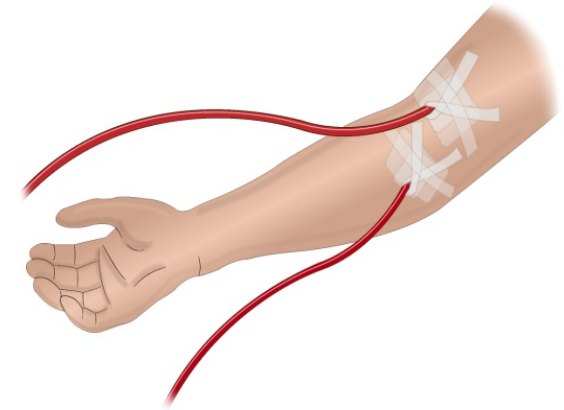
Royal Infirmary Edinburgh
51 Little France Crescent
Edinburgh
EH16 4SA

Vascular Access Team: **0131 242 1205**

Dialysis Unit RIE: **0131 242 1210**

If you would like further written information on fistulas/grafts please ask nursing staff in the dialysis unit.

Readability & Layout Reviewed by NHSL Patient and Carer
Information Team v1.0 Jun2019 For review Jun2021



How to look after your fistula or graft

Recognise the warning signs

What to do if your fistula starts bleeding out with dialysis

Caring for your Fistula/Graft

Before dialysis

Keep your fistula/graft clean. Please wash your hands and fistula before taking a seat for dialysis. If you are unable to stand at the sink, please ask a member of staff for a skin cleansing wipe.

Post dialysis

Apply direct pressure to site using a sterile swab. Please wash your hands before leaving the unit.

If you are unable to hold your own sites, please let the nursing staff know. They can help and document this information in your file for future record.

Hold your **fistula sites for 10 min** minimum without checking. Hold your **graft sites for 15 min minimum** without checking. Checking too early can disrupt the clot formation process.

Remember:

It is important to apply pressure for the right amount of time to ensure bleeding has stopped.

Be aware

It is rare for a fistula/graft to bleed excessively after dialysis but it can happen. There are warning signs you need to be aware of and be ready to respond.

Warning signs

There is a higher risk of excess bleeding if your fistula or graft:

- Does not heal properly (observe for scab development).
- Is infected.
- Has thin or shiny skin overlying it.

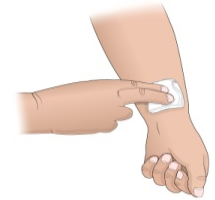
If you notice any of these warning signs, please notify staff in the Dialysis Unit or the Vascular Access Team as soon as possible.

Contact details:

Vascular Access Nurses:
0131 242 1205
RIE HD: **0131 242 1210**
WGH HD: **0131 537 2566**
SJH HD: **01506 523 3887**

If a fistula/graft bleeds

- Stay calm, apply **direct, firm, continuous pressure** to the bleeding site.



- Call for help. If help is available ask them to call **999**. **Do not delay getting help.**
- If no help is available continue to apply pressure to your fistula/graft and call 999. State you have an arterial bleed from dialysis fistula/graft urgent medical help required.
- Keep **direct, firm, continuous pressure** on your fistula until help arrives using a finger or, finger and sterile swab from your emergency kit. **Do not use a large item such as a towel** because it can disperse the pressure you are trying to apply.
- If you have a small bleed at home that stops quickly please let the dialysis staff know.

Remember: if in doubt call 999.

Be prepared: if possible, always carry your emergency kit with you.