



# HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY HEMODIALYSIS CATHETER?

The optimal access for dialysis is a AV Fistula or AV Graft, but sometimes our veins are not healthy enough for this option. **surgeons are unable to create an access in time.** In this case a dialysis catheter will be placed in your chest, normally just below your shoulder. This will allow us **temporary** access to your blood to do the dialysis.

Patient Tutorial

## What is a hemodialysis catheter?

We use a tunneled catheter that is placed under the skin. There are 2 types: Cuffed and non-cuffed. The non-cuffed catheter is used in emergencies and for short periods, up to 3 weeks.



## When do we use the cuffed hemodialysis catheter?

- An AV fistula/-graft has been created, but is not ready
- **It is our last option e.g.,** for example the blood vessels are not healthy/strong enough for a fistula/graft
- **Not enough time or person to ill to create an fistula**



## Signs of infection

- Fever
- Chills
- Drainage from exit site
- Redness/tenderness around exit site
- General feeling of weakness and illness

## What can I do to keep my catheter working well?

- Check your blood flow rate with each dialysis and report to your doctor is the blood flow rate is lower than 200ml/min
- Know the signs of infection and report it immediately
- Attend all your dialysis sessions – this will help to identify and treat possible complications early
- Know your Kt/V result – this tells you how well you dialyze. A good blood flow of more than 300ml/min will improve your Kt/V result, unless contraindicated by your doctor.
- Ask the staff to teach you about the arterial pressure on the machine – a very low pressure will indicate a clot in your catheter, this can be removed without replacing the catheter if identified and treated early

## How do I take care of my hemodialysis catheter?

By taking **care** of your catheter you will ensure that your catheter lasts longer and complications of infections and clotting are less **likely to occur**

- Keep your dressing clean and dry
- Make sure the health care provider cleans the dressing with each dialysis session using the aseptic technique
- Ask your health care provider to teach you how to change your dressing at home safely if the dressing gets wet and needs changing
- **Never** remove the caps at the end of the catheter, air must never enter the catheter
- Do not shower/swim. You may take a bath, taking care not to wet the catheter (a wet dressing can cause an infection)
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when the dressing is changed to prevent infection
- The catheter **must only** be used for dialysis
- If the area around the entrance of your catheter is itching, is red and sore inform the health care provider immediately, this may be a sign of infection
- Wash your hands before and after you enter the dialysis unit, remind staff to wash their hands before they replace your dressing

