



# Tunneled dialysis catheter: what to do if you suspect an infection or other problem

**This leaflet is for care home staff and gives care and troubleshooting advice for patients with tunneled dialysis catheters (TDCs).**

## **Important things to know:**

- The exit site should be covered with a dry sterile dressing at all times. The nurses in the Dialysis Unit will check and change the dressing every time when the patient attends for dialysis. Do not change the dressing yourself. If it comes off unexpectedly please call the dialysis unit for advice.
- Patients must never shower when they have a TDC. Low baths are allowed, but please do keep the TDC area dry. The patient is not allowed to go swimming.
- If there is difficulty in washing the patient's hair, then you can try a 'shampoo shower cap'. These can be purchased online or from pharmacies. They are easy to use and will allow hair washing without a shower.
- The TDC is for dialysis only. Do not let anyone take a blood sample from it and do not let anyone give drugs through it.
- Be careful not to bump or knock the line as this can damage it. Do not use any sharp objects i.e. scissors, around the line. Do not pinch, poke, bend or pull the line.
- If either of the lines ever falls out, use sterile dressing or gauze and apply pressure at the site. Contact the number listed below as soon as possible if this happens.
- If you see heavy bleeding through the dressing and around the exit site of either of the lines, press on top of the existing dressing and contact the number listed below.
- If the line becomes sore, painful or oozes any fluid, let the Haemodialysis Unit know, (day or night), especially if the patient feels unwell or has a temperature as there could be a serious infection in the bloodstream, which may require antibiotics. The TDC may need to be removed.
- **Phone your Dialysis Unit immediately if one of the lines falls out or one of the caps ever comes off the end.**

Benyon Dialysis Unit: 0118 322 8360  
Enborne Dialysis Unit: 01635 273640  
Windsor Dialysis Unit: 01753 866008

Bracknell Dialysis Unit: 01344 662961  
Huntley & Palmer Dialysis Unit: 0118 322 8519  
Home HD patients call: 0118 322 7918 /  
**Out of hours contact: Victoria Ward: 0118 322 7476**

Do not leave a message of the unit answerphone.

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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