

Fistula or graft problems: what to do

If your fistula or graft starts to bleed excessively and you cannot apply enough pressure to stop it **YOU MUST CALL 999** and go to your nearest A&E dept. They can contact your haemodialysis unit or Victoria Ward for further advice.

Maintain good hygiene to prevent an infection

- Keep your arm clean at all times. Before each dialysis session, you will be asked to wash your fistula/graft arm with Octenisan cleanser and water then dry it thoroughly before your needles are inserted.
- Do not pick at scabs from the needle sites or scratch your arm.
- If any part of your fistula or graft arm becomes sore, red or inflamed contact your renal department or Victoria Ward out of hours as soon as possible.

Other problems or complications associated with a fistula or graft

- If you get any blood leaking from your needle site, apply firm pressure using a flat round object such as a clean, plastic milk bottle top. If the bleeding does not stop within 15 minutes, call your haemodialysis unit for advice. If this is out of hours please call Victoria Ward.
- You should check that your fistula or graft is “buzzing” every day. This indicates it is working and is called a thrill or bruit. If the thrill has changed or is faint or absent, contact your dialysis area or Victoria Ward immediately.
- Do not let anybody put a blood pressure cuff on your fistula or graft arm.
- Do not wear watches or tight cuffs on your fistula or graft arm.
- The fistula or graft should only be used for haemodialysis. Blood should not be taken from your fistula or graft and intravenous drugs should not be given through or into it.
- Do not lift heavy loads (e.g. shopping bags) with your fistula or graft arm. Do not participate in weight training or similar exercise. Take care when gardening or similar activities that your arm does not get scratched or dirty.
- Be careful not to bump or cut your fistula or graft.
- If you experience diarrhoea and vomiting, you may quickly become de-hydrated and your fistula or graft may stop working. Keep checking for the thrill/bruit. Call your unit or Victoria Ward if you are concerned.

- If your blood pressure becomes very low or you are dehydrated, this may cause the fistula or graft to stop working. If the buzz changes, call your haemodialysis unit, Renal vascular access nurse or Victoria Ward.

Benyon Dialysis Unit: 0118 322 8360

Bracknell Dialysis Unit: 01344 662961

CAPD Unit: 0118 322 8555

Huntley & Palmer Dialysis Unit: 0118 322 8519

Kidney Care Nurses: 0118 322 7899

Transplant Nurses: 0118 322 5111 pager 40593

Windsor Dialysis Unit: 01753 866008

Renal vascular access nurse: 0118 322 8526

If the above departments are closed please contact:

Victoria Ward: 0118 322 7462 or 0118 322 7476.

Further information

Further information can be found at the following websites:

www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk/patient-info

www.beaumont.ie/kidneycentre-forpatients-aquidetodialysis-accessfo

www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

London Road

Reading RG1 5AN

Telephone 0118 322 5111

www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Renal Medicine, Reviewed: January 2018

Review due: January 2020