

Bleeding Fistula or Graft: Emergency Measures

It is very rare for your fistula or graft to bleed after you leave the dialysis unit. For some people the chances are a little higher and the bleeding may be more serious. If your health care team has identified that you may be one of those people, this brochure tells you what to do. If you still have questions after reading this, talk to your doctor or other member of the health care team.

What reasons might make a person more likely to bleed excessively from their fistula or graft?

You are at higher likelihood to bleed excessively from your fistula or graft if

1. An area on your fistula or graft:
 - Is not healing
 - Is infected
 - Is bulging and is noticeably increasing in size
 - Feels more pulsatile or firmer
 - Has a very thin and shiny skin
2. Your venous pressures are high.
3. Your INR (bleeding time ratio) is higher than 2.

If you have any of these, please let your dialysis nurse know.

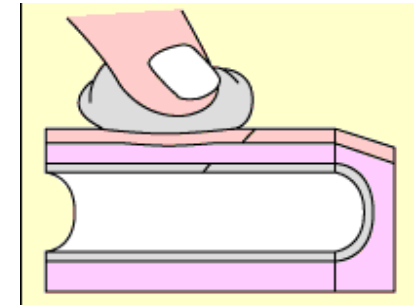
If I am at risk for excessively bleeding from my fistula or graft, what supplies should I keep on hand?

Supplies that you should keep on hand in your emergency kit include:

- 5 packets gauze pads, 4" x 4"
- 1 adhesive dressing or tape
- 2 pairs of gloves (unsterile)

What should I do if there is excessive bleeding from my fistula or graft after I leave the dialysis unit?

- Call for help from anyone who is at home with you
- Contact the Renal Unit if during working hours
- Call 999 or have the person with you call 999. You will need emergency attention even if the bleeding stops.
- Using gauze from your emergency kit, put pressure on the spot that is bleeding with the tips of your fingers and press very firmly into your arm at that spot. If you do not have gauze handy, use an absorbent cloth, tissue, or paper towel.



- If this does not stop the bleeding, keep holding pressure over the hole.
- If you are still not able to control the bleeding call for help, get to the emergency department immediately or call 999.

Contact telephone numbers

Renal Unit – RSH 01743261673, 01743263170

Home Haemodialysis Unit - 01743261170

Renal Vascular Access Nurse – 01743261055, 07811815359

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Care of Your Fistula or Graft

GO!



Check for a thrill at least once every day.

Before dialysis:

- Wash your hands and your access with warm water and antibacterial soap.

After dialysis:

- Hold your own needle sites wearing gloves for 10 – 15 minutes.
- Avoid wrapping tape all around your access arm.
- Take the gauze off 4 – 6 hours after your dialysis treatment.
- If your fistula or graft starts to bleed after dialysis, apply pressure. If the bleeding does not stop, keep applying pressure and go to emergency.

CAUTION!



Do NOT allow anyone to take a blood pressure, put an IV, or draw blood on your access arm.

Avoid scratching or picking scabs on your access arm.

Avoid things that might reduce the blood flow or damage your access.

STOP!



Call your kidney doctor (nephrologist) or dialysis unit if...

- You can't feel a thrill.
- There is new redness, warmth, swelling, or pain in your access arm or oozing from your access.
- You are feverish, and have any of the above symptoms.

Remember - fistula / graft is your lifeline - Please take care of it!