

## Graft for Hemodialysis – After Care

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### What problems can I have with my graft?

Your dialysis care team will help you learn what to look for to prevent problems. You should watch for:

- infection
- clotting
- bleeding

### Infection

It is important to watch for the signs of infection:

- the skin around the graft site is red, warm or hot to touch
- your arm is swollen, tender or painful to touch
- you have a fever or chills
- you have drainage around the incision



If you have any of these signs, contact your dialysis care team right away.

### Prevent infection

- ✘ **Do not scratch the skin around the graft area.** Let your dialysis care team know if your skin is itchy. Scratching may cause your skin to break and become infected. Medication and/or cream can be ordered or the cleaning solution can be changed.

### Check your graft for clotting

There are 2 ways to check for good blood flow in your graft:

1. You can listen for a sound called a bruit near the graft incision site. You pronounce the word bruit like brew-ee.
2. You can feel for a thrill at the graft incision site. A thrill feels like buzzing under your skin.

The bruit and thrill tell you that your graft is working well. Check your graft every day.

Your dialysis care team will show you how to listen and feel for a bruit and thrill in your graft. If you do not hear the bruit or feel a thrill, call your dialysis care team right away. It may mean that the blood has clotted or stopped.

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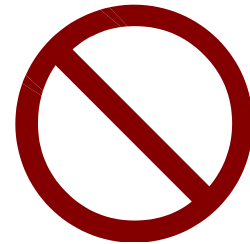
### Prevent clotting

To prevent blood clotting:

- Protect your graft from bumping.
- Do not carry heavy objects using your graft arm if your graft is in your arm.
- Do not wear tight things on your graft limb such as a watch, bracelet, ankle bracelet, tight pants etc. This depends where your graft is.
- Do not sleep with pressure on your graft limb.

**✘ Do not let anyone:**

- Take blood from your graft limb.
- Start an intravenous in your graft limb.
- Take a blood pressure on your graft limb.



### Working together

It is important for your graft to last as long as it can. When you work closely with your dialysis care team, your graft can last for years.

Each time you come for dialysis treatments make sure the needles are put into a different spot. Moving the needle sites  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or 5 mm along the graft site lets your blood vessels heal and helps your graft last.

### Where can I get help?

If you have any questions or concerns contact your nephrologist, vascular access team or a member of your dialysis care team.

### Medical Alert Identification

You should wear medical alert identification.

You can get an application from your pharmacy.

Talk to your vascular access team or dialysis care team about what to have written on the medical alert identification.

