

Making a Buttonhole Using Clampcaths

What is a clampcath?

A clampcath is a thin, plastic tube put through your skin into the fistula to make a buttonhole site.

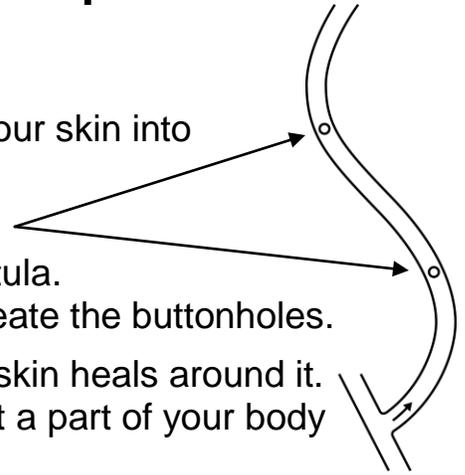
Two buttonholes are required for hemodialysis.

Therefore 2 clampcath tubes are put into the fistula.

The tubes are left in the fistula for 10 days to create the buttonholes.

Each tube makes a tunnel of scar tissue as the skin heals around it. This is the same as what happens when you get a part of your body pierced.

After 10 days the buttonholes are formed and the clampcaths are removed. A dull needle is put into each buttonhole to do dialysis treatments. The needles are then removed after each hemodialysis treatment.



How do I care for my arm while the tubes are in?

You have an increased risk of infection while the tubes are in.

An antibiotic ointment and dressing is placed over the sites where the tubes go in and your arm is wrapped with gauze to prevent the tubes from falling out. The dressing is changed each time you come for dialysis over the next 10 days. **It is important that the dressing stays in place on your skin and does not get wet.**

What happens if a tube falls out before 10 days?

If a tube comes out, apply firm direct pressure to the site with dry gauze for at least 10 minutes to stop any bleeding.

Call the Hemodialysis Unit and tell the nurse that a clampcath has fallen out. The nurse will tell you what to do.

If you are not able to stop the bleeding, go to the nearest Emergency Department.



When should I call for help?

- Your arm looks red or swollen
- The area around the site feels sore, burning or painful
- The dressing is wet
- A catheter tube falls out
- You have a fever



Contact numbers:

- Hemodialysis Unit: _____
- Home Dialysis Unit: _____
- Vascular Access Coordinator: _____