

Care of needling sites after hemodialysis (Hemostasis)

At the end of your dialysis treatment, a member of your dialysis care team will take one needle out first. When the blood vessel from the first needle site is clotted, the second needle is then pulled out.

Your dialysis care team will teach you how to put pressure on the needle sites to promote clotting. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Put on gloves.
2. After the first needle is pulled out, with 2 fingers and gauze, apply gentle, firm pressure over the needle site and just above. Using 2 fingers makes sure you are putting pressure on the needle insertion site on the skin as well as the place where the needle went into the fistula or graft.
3. Apply gentle, firm pressure without releasing pressure:
 - 5 to 10 minutes for a **fistula**
 - No less than 10 minutes for a **graft**
 - Make sure you can still feel a thrill over the access when applying pressure. If you cannot feel a thrill, apply less pressure.
4. When the first site has stopped bleeding, put a bandaid or gauze and tape over it. Always avoid wrapping any bandage, gauze or tape all around your access arm. This could reduce blood flow in your access and cause it to clot.
5. After the second needle is pulled out, follow the steps again.

Do not leave the hemodialysis unit until a member of your dialysis care team member has checked your access.

Care At Home

- You can remove the bandages or gauze dressings 4 to 6 hours after dialysis.
- You can expect scabs to form at the needling sites. Avoid scratching or picking the scabs.

If your access starts to bleed after you leave the dialysis unit:

- Apply gentle, firm pressure for 10 minutes using a clean towel or gauze.
- Try to keep your access above the level of your heart while applying pressure.
- Do not release pressure.
- If the bleeding does not stop, keep applying pressure and go the Emergency Department right away.
- It is a good idea to always carry some bandaids and gauze with you.

Remember to tell your dialysis care team on your next visit if you had bleeding after any dialysis treatment.