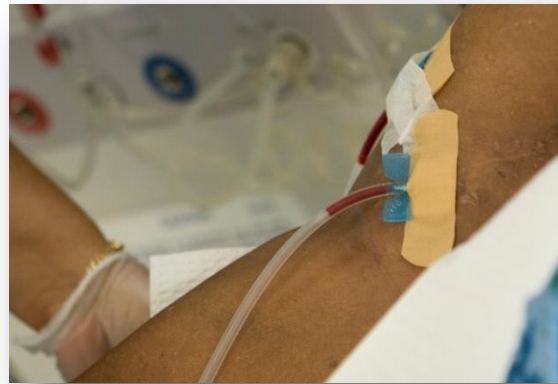


Infection Prevention

Washing Your Vascular Access

Have you ever wondered why dialysis staff ask you to wash your access? Sure you have, especially if you just took a shower or bath before coming for treatment. Well, they're asking for good reason. Here's why washing your access site right before going to your dialysis chair is so important:

- You are a kidney patient. Kidney patients are immunosuppressed. This means that you are at a high risk for getting an infection. Some infections are even resistant to antibiotics.
- Vascular access infection is the most common infection in hemodialysis patients. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is the second most common cause of death (15%).
- By reducing the number of bacteria on your access, there is less risk of bacteria getting into your blood. A sterile bloodstream means less chance of infection.



Knowing the Signs and Symptoms

It is important to know the signs of infection. Call your doctor or nurse right away if you notice any:

- Bleeding from your vascular access site.
- Redness, swelling, soreness, pain, warmth, or drainage around the site.
- Fever over 100.5°F (38.0°C).
- Slowness in the pulse (thrill) in your graft or fistula; or you do not feel it at all.
- Swelling of the arm where your catheter is placed.
- Changes in your hand, such as it getting unusually cold, numb, or weak.

Sources: HSAG gratefully acknowledges the Northwest Renal Network (NW16) for the development of the content used in this resource.
CDC Recommendations for Preventing Transmission of Infections Among Chronic Hemodialysis Patients. MMWR 2001; 50(5): 13.
www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/healthcare/dialysis/Tips_for_Dialysis_Patients.pdf
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000591.htm

To file a grievance please contact HSAG: ESRD Network 7:

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