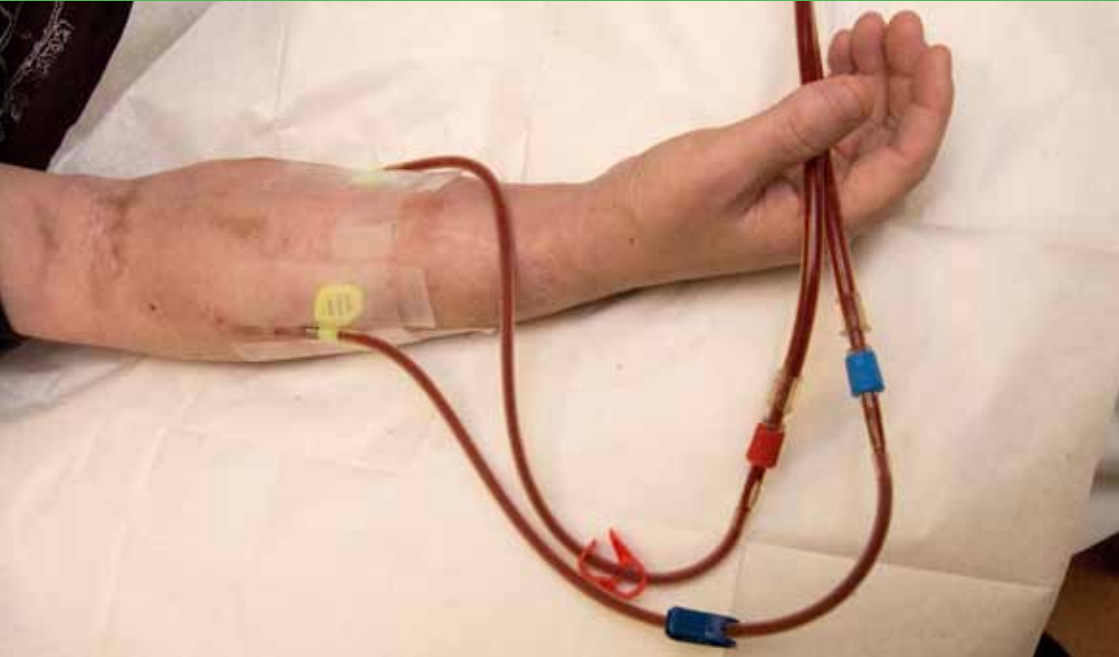


# Caring for your new AV graft



Hope Building  
Renal  
0161 206 1333



This booklet is designed for patients who have had an operation to have a Graft (artificial material) inserted into their arm or leg for haemodialysis

## What happens after the operation?

The nursing staff will check your graft regularly to make sure it is working.

There may be some discomfort felt at the surgery site. Please inform nursing staff if you are experiencing pain.

You should be able to use your arm/leg as normal once the discomfort of healing skin has settled. Please continue with your usual analgesia or over the counter paracetamol if you are not already taking a paracetamol containing product.

You may experience some:

- Numbness to the thumb and index finger of your graft hand. This may last for 3-4 days. Please let either your CKD/Advanced Kidney care team nurse, vascular access specialist nurse or your haemodialysis nursing team know if this persists or restricts normal movement/activity
- Bruising may occur following surgery, but this should resolve in approximately one week
- You may observe some swelling of your fingers/hand. This normally takes approximately one week to settle on its own - raising your arm on a pillow when resting sometimes helps
- However if any of these symptoms do not improve/or you notice any discolouring of the fingers of your graft hand or toes of your graft foot, you will need to contact the vascular access specialist nurse, renal unit or renal ward where you had your surgery immediately
- You may notice a small area of bleeding on your dressing; if this increases and reaches the edges of the dressing or is wet to touch you will need to contact the vascular access specialist nurse, your renal unit or renal ward where you had your surgery immediately. (Please see last page for contact telephone numbers
- If bleeding is continuous and seeping through the dressing, please apply pressure directly to the bleeding point, call for help from a relative or a neighbour and call 999 immediately

## What happens when I go home?

When you have been discharged home, you will need to have your graft dressing changed by a district or practice nurse, the ward nursing staff will arrange this for you.

If you are on haemodialysis, nursing staff on the renal unit can change your dressing when you attend for dialysis. Stitches are usually dissolvable (do not need to be removed) unless otherwise informed.

You will be taught by nursing staff how to check if your graft is still working - by feeling with your fingers near the incision site/scar for the 'thrill' (a light buzzing/tingling sensation). You should check your graft at least twice a day.

If this thrill disappears, you will need to contact your dialysis vascular specialist nurse, your renal unit or renal ward where you had your surgery immediately. (Please see last page for contact telephone numbers).

## Exercises

You are not required to do any exercises following insertion of your graft because once the swelling and bruising has settled your graft can be used for haemodialysis.

## What are the do's and don'ts?


- Do not wear tight jewellery or clothing that could restrict the blood flow to the graft. If you have a graft in your arm, consider moving your wristwatch and rings to the other arm
- Do not carry anything heavy with your graft arm as this may cause you some discomfort, especially on the suture line/scar or may injure your graft
- Avoid exposure of your graft arm/leg to extreme cold as this reduces blood flow in the graft
- It is important that you do not sleep on graft arm/leg, as pressure can cause your graft to stop working
- During wound healing, please shower where possible to avoid prolonged soaking in the bath/wound getting wet, this will help reduce the risk of infection
- We recommend that you do not drive after your operation until the surgical wound is healed. This usually takes approximately two weeks
- You may be required to take Aspirin daily for 8 weeks to help prevent clotting and improve blood flow through your graft
- Please do attend your follow up review scan appointment (vein mapping)
- If you are admitted to any hospital tell the staff that you have a graft
- **Please NEVER let anyone take any blood samples, carry out blood pressure readings or put an infusions into your graft arm/leg (this can cause the graft to stop working)**

## Contact Telephone numbers for Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust:

Vascular Access Specialist Nurse:

 **0161 206 1333**

Vascular Access Co-ordinator:

 **0161 206 0831**

Vascular Access Secretary:

 **0161 206 0645**

CKD/Advanced Kidney Care Team:

 **0161 206 1882**

Ward H3:

 **0161 206 4633**


 **0161 206 4634**

Renal Unit Short Stay:

 **0161 206 5228**

 **0161 206 5229**

Renal HDU

 **0161 206 4635**

Email:

 **renalvanurses@srft.nhs.uk**

### Remember:

Treat your graft with care.  
It is an essential requirement for effective haemodialysis treatment.

## Notes

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Review Date: October 2019

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For further information on this leaflet, it's references and sources used, please contact **0161 206 1333**

Copies of this information are available in other languages and formats upon request.

In accordance with the Equality Act we will make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable individuals with disabilities, to access this treatment / service.

**If you need this interpreting please telephone**

Polish

Jeżeli potrzebne jest Państwu tłumaczenie, proszę zadzwonić pod numer.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس ترجمانی کی ضرورت ہے تو مہربانی کر کے فون کریں۔

Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة الى تفسير او ترجمة هذا الرجاء الاتصال

Chinese

如果需要翻译，请拨打电话

Farsi

اگر به ترجمه این نیاز دارید ، لطفاً تلفن کنید

**0161 206 0224**

Email: [InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk](mailto:InterpretationandTrans@srft.nhs.uk)

**Salford Royal operates a smoke-free policy.**

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Hospital Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 0161 206 1779

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<http://www.srft.nhs.uk/for-patients>