

WHEN YOU GO HOME

- Check for fistula function at least twice a day. This is done by placing 2 fingers over the operation site and feeling for a “buzz” sensation. This is called the thrill.
- Keep skin clean. Check for signs of infection – swelling, redness, and soreness.
- Exercise the fistula arm to help improve the blood flow. This is done by squeezing a squash ball 10 times over an hour daily. Commence 48hrs after the operation.
- Elevate the arm if swelling is present after the operation.
- Do not restrict the blood flow to your fistula. Avoid wearing watches, jewellery and tight sleeves on the fistula arm.
- Do not sleep or put pressure on your fistula arm.
- Do not lift heavy objects more than 1 kg for 8 weeks.
- **Do not allow blood pressure, blood sampling, armbands or IV cannula insertion on the fistula arm.**

Please check your fistula twice daily. If you think that the buzz sensation is less or has stopped call

Vascular Access Nurse

0457 756 436

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(Mon-Fri 8.00am-4.30pm)

Afterhours go to the Emergency Department

Follow up appointments with

Vascular Access Nurse at

4West Dialysis Unit

0457 756 436

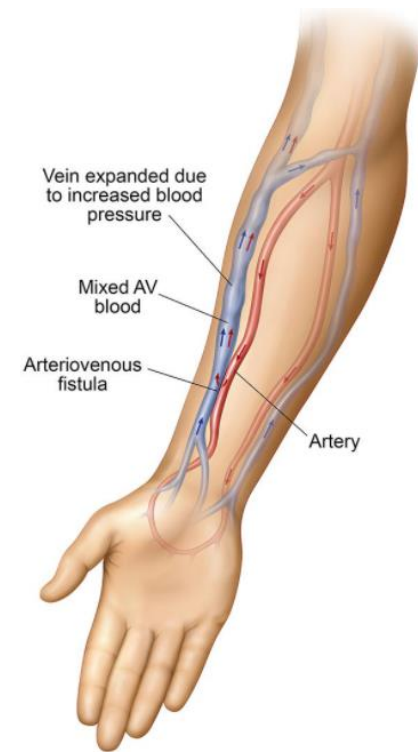
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Reviewed By
St George Hospital
Consumer Advisory Group
Working together



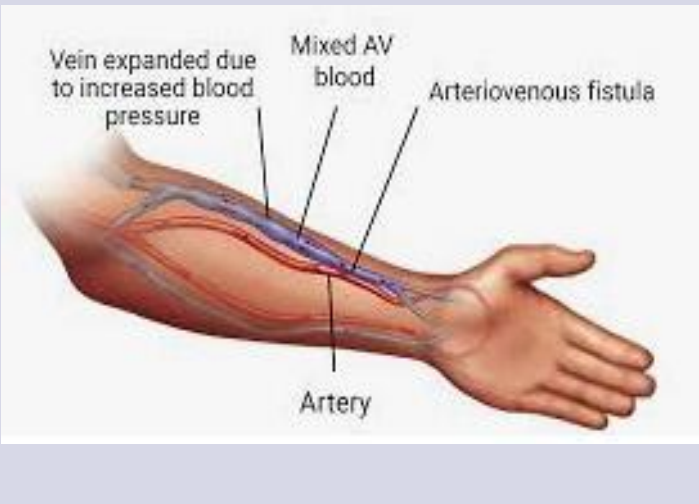
Arterial Venous Fistula Information Brochure



Created with the assistance of 4West Patients in 2022
Produced by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

When your kidneys fail it will be necessary to have haemodialysis. In order for you to have haemodialysis as a treatment, you will need to have an operation so that blood can be removed and returned to your body easily and safely.

An Arterial Venous (AV) fistula is a surgically constructed communication between an artery and a vein. It normally takes the vein 6 – 8 weeks to mature (enlarge) into a suitable access for haemodialysis. A common site where the fistula is created is the forearm (usually left for right handed people and vice versa). A fistula may also be created in your leg.



BEFORE THE OPERATION

- Blood pressure readings, blood sampling and intravenous infusions should not be done on the chosen arm to preserve blood vessels.
- Your arm blood vessels will be mapped by ultrasound to establish the best arm to use.
- You will need to sign a consent form for the operation from your surgeon.
- You will need to shower with an antibacterial soap before the surgery.
- Explanation about the AV fistula operation is provided by both doctors and nursing staff. Please do not hesitate to ask questions.

THE OPERATION

The operation is usually a day procedure. You may have a local anaesthetic (an anaesthetic where only your arm is numb), or general anaesthetic (where you are asleep). This depends on the condition of your heart.

AFTER THE OPERATION

- Your fistula arm will be dressed and bandaged in the operating theatre.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be taken regularly. It is important that the nursing staff check the fistula regularly.
- The colour, warmth, sensation and movement of the hand or foot need to be observed.
- Elevate your arm to reduce swelling.
- You are likely to experience some numbness in the arm and when this wears off you may feel pain. Do not hesitate to ask for a pain relief tablet.
- The arm dressing is left intact for 48 hours.
- No sutures (stitches) are used on the wound usually.
- You will be seen weekly by the Vascular Access Nurse who will provide education, follow up appointments and monitor your fistula.