

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 fistula arm to help improve the blood flow – squeeze a squash ball 10 times an hour at least 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 arm.
- Do not sleep or put pressure on your fistula arm.
- Do not lift heavy (more than 1kg) objects for 6 weeks.
- Do not allow blood pressure, blood sampling and IV cannula insertion on the fistula arm.

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

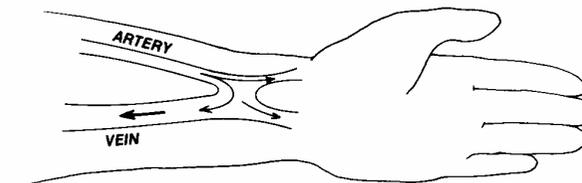
Vascular Access Nurse
0457756436
9113 1111 page 310
(Mon-Fri 8.00am-4.30pm)
otherwise go to the
Emergency Department

For further information ask
the Vascular Access Nurse
9113 1111 page 310
Mobile 0457756436
(Mon-Fri 8.00-4.30)

otherwise call the staff on
4 West Haemodialysis
9113 1151
9113 2078

For clinic appointments contact
91134534

St George Hospital Renal Department Patient Education Leaflet

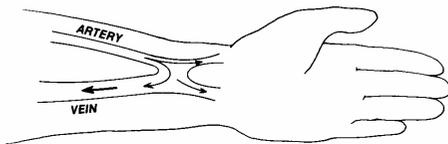


AV FISTULA INFORMATION

Ó St George Hospital Renal Department 2013

When your kidneys fail it will be necessary to have dialysis. 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 A.V. fistula is a surgically constructed connection between an artery and a vein. It normally takes the vein 6 weeks to mature (enlarge) into a high flow 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

- To preserve blood vessels, blood pressure readings, blood sampling and intravenous infusions should not be done on the chosen arm.
- Explanation about the fistula operation is provided by both doctors and nursing staff. Please do not hesitate to ask questions.
- You will need to sign a consent form for the operation.

The operation

The operation either takes place under a local anaesthetic, brachial nerve block (an anaesthetic where only your arm is numb), or general anaesthetic. This depends on the condition of your heart.

After the operation

- You will spend a little time in the Recovery Unit before returning to the ward.
- 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 are observed.
- Your arm will be elevated 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.
- If the stitches are not the dissolving type they will be removed in 7 days.
- You will be seen by the Vascular Access Nurse and she will provide education, follow up appointments and monitoring of the fistula.

Follow up appointments with the Vascular Access Nurse occur weekly until your fistula function is adequate.