

Caring for Your Dialysis Catheter

New Catheters

(Within Three to Five Days of Placement.)

- **Do not** remove the dressing.
- **Do not** shower or get the catheter wet.
- Only healthcare professionals should touch the dressing or catheter device.

Ongoing Care of Catheters

- **Do not** pull, bend, poke, or pinch the catheter.
- **Do not** remove the dressing.
- **Do not** take the caps off.
- **Do not** use sharp objects around the catheter (scissors and knives).
- **Do not** let pets and small children near the catheter service area.
- **Do not** get the catheter wet.
 - Avoid the shower.
 - When bathing or coming in contact with water, cover with plastic wrap and tape to create a strong seal.
 - Do not submerge in water (swimming pools, hot tubs) until the catheter is removed and the skin has healed.
- **Do not ever** inject anything into the catheter/catheter tubing.
 - It is for dialysis only. This could be fatal.
- **Don not** touch the open end of the catheter when the caps have been removed by a nurse or dialysis technician.

IMPORTANT!

If Your Catheter Dressing Gets Wet, Loose, or Soiled

Keep an Emergency Kit:

- Clean gloves (several pairs)
- Large individually wrapped alcohol wipes
- A transparent dressing, individually packaged sterile gauze and/or large bandage (individually wrapped)
- A roll of medical tape (silk, paper, or transparent)
- Other supplies as needed

Before touching the dressing, **wash your hands** for 20 seconds with liquid antibacterial soap. Dry thoroughly using paper towels. If the problem is just a partially loose dressing, **do not remove it**. Place a large bandage or sterile gauze over a loosened dressing. Secure with tape.

If your dressing is wet, dirty, or is coming off, carefully remove it and*:

1. Clean the area in question with alcohol wipes.
 - a) Cleanse in sections 4 x 5 inches in size, for 30 seconds using an up-and-down or side-to-side motion.
2. Allow the area to dry for 30 seconds.
3. Inspect the area around the site for any sign of infection (redness, swelling, drainage, tenderness, warmth, or odor).
4. Check the entire chest area for new or prominent discharge, veins, rash, change in color, or swelling.
5. Cover the site with large bandage or sterile gauze and secure with tape as needed.
6. Tape the catheter tubing to your skin to prevent the catheter from dangling or catching on loose clothing
7. **Go to your dialysis center as soon as possible.**

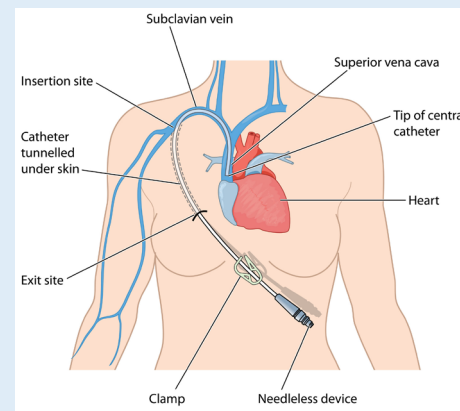
Call the doctor's office if you see any sign of infection. Also report dry skin, rash, or irritation at the site.

Note: There may be some oozing of blood from the site for several days after CVC placement. If there is a lot of blood, or if the site keeps bleeding, call the doctor.

**If alternate instructions have been provided for your particular catheter, refer to those directions and instructions.*

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Your CVC: What You Need to Know



What Are the Facts?

- Your dialysis central venous catheter (CVC) tip sits inside the heart chamber.
- CVCs are the **last choice access** for hemodialysis patients:
- CVCs are highly susceptible to infections.
- CVC dressings must stay clean and dry, so you will want to avoid showers, swimming pools, and excessive sweating.
- A CVC put you at higher risk for an emergency situation (CVC displacement and clots in your blood vessels).
- CVCs require management. They must be changed out on a regular basis if a permanent access is not placed.
- CVCs place restrictions on regular daily activities.

Always be aware of the condition of your catheter site and the dressing covering it. Sometimes, things don't go as planned and when that happens, we want you to feel prepared to manage the situation until you can get to your dialysis center.

Signs of Catheter Problems

Signs of a catheter infection and other catheter problems are similar for all types of CVCs. If you have any signs of infection or catheter problems, **call your doctor and seek medical attention immediately.**

Signs of infection, clotting, or other problems include:

- Redness, tenderness, drainage, warmth, or odor around the catheter site.
- Fever of 100.5F (38 C) or greater, or chills.
- Swelling of the face, neck, chest, or arm on the side where your catheter is inserted.
- Leakage of blood or fluid at the catheter site or the cap.
- Displacement or lengthening of the catheter (cuff exposure).

Your Dialysis

Clinic: _____

Clinic Phone

Number: _____

Problem Solving for CVCs	
Emergency	Response
Sudden chest, neck, or shoulder pain, coughing, or difficulty breathing	Make sure the CVC is clamped. Lie on your left side with your head down. Stay in this position while your caregiver calls 911.
Accidental removal of the CVC from the chest	Apply pressure to the exit site and chest area above it with a gauze dressing or clean washcloth and seek medical attention immediately. If possible, notify your dialysis facility so the doctor can assist in making arrangements to have another CVC placed prior to your next dialysis.
Accidental removal of injection cap	Notify your dialysis facility, they may need you to return to the facility to replace the end cap that is missing. Until then, wrap the end of the lumen with sterile gauze and secure with tape to keep the exposed tubing clean.
Swelling of face, neck, chest, or arm. New or prominent chest veins.	Call the doctor's office/dialysis facility (number written below) or go to the nearest emergency department for evaluation.
Drainage, redness, swelling, or bleeding at the exit site	Call the nephrologist (kidney doctor) or the dialysis facility for instructions on where to go for evaluation.
Fever of 100.5F. (38C) or greater and/or chills	Call the nephrologist/family doctor to be reevaluated OR go to the nearest emergency department if fever is accompanied by other symptoms of infection such as chills, red streak on or near the catheter site, foul smelling drainage, and unusual discharge from the exit site, weakness, or delusions.

More Important Things to Remember

- To prevent infection, **do not try to handle your catheter or change the dressing** unless it becomes loose, wet, or dirty.
 - Your dialysis staff will be changing your catheter dressing at every dialysis treatment.
- Your catheter should **not** be used by other medical personnel or for treatments other than dialysis.
 - Healthcare personnel outside of dialysis must first contact your dialysis facility or your kidney doctor (nephrologist) before using your dialysis catheter.
- **Wash your hands** to prevent infection.
 - Wash frequently for 20 seconds, using liquid antibacterial soap and paper towels to dry your hands.
 - Wash before and after dialysis and periodically throughout the day after being exposed to people, objects, and surfaces.
 - Make sure healthcare professionals providing you care wash as well.
- **Live your best life possible! Make getting a permanent access for dialysis a priority.**
 - Talk to your nephrologist or your dialysis center staff about getting a permanent access right away.
 - Find more information about permanent vascular access at <https://www.hsag.com/en/esrd-networks/esrd-network-17/for-patients-and-families/vascular-access/>.