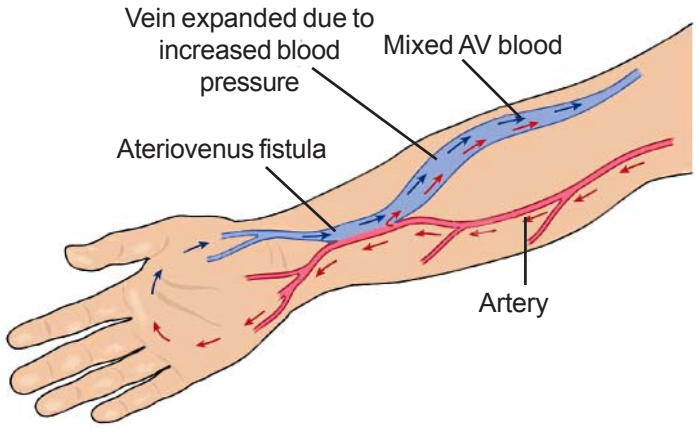
NHS
Calderdale and Huddersfield
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Vascular Surgery

Fistula Care

Information for Patients and Relatives



Why do I need a fistula?

To carry out haemodialysis – a good, strong blood supply is needed to circulate from the body through the dialysis machine.

What is a fistula?

A fistula is a direct connection between artery and vein.

The blood from the artery goes straight into the vein which matures over 6-8 weeks and becomes bigger and firmer.

The bigger and firmer vein enables two needles to be inserted. Blood can be taken out of the body, sent through the dialysis machine and returned to the body via the second needle.

The main advantage of having a fistula is that there is less infection risk than having a central venous catheter.

A fistula can also provide better quality dialysis than a line.

What happens next?

Following education by the Pre-Dialysis Team in clinic, the Vascular Access Team will refer you to the vascular surgeon and to the Ultrasound Department where you will have a scan of your arms to determine the best location for the fistula to be formed.

The vascular surgeon will talk to you about the operation and explain some of the risks and complications. You will then be referred to the pre-assessment clinic who will complete all the necessary paperwork, blood tests and swabs prior to the surgery.

compassionate care

The Operation/Surgery

This is usually performed at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. You will be asked to arrive on the designated ward at a given time. You might need to stay overnight if you have other medical problems or live alone. The operation is normally performed under local anaesthetic or under nerve block/arm block, which numbs the whole arm.

Depending of the type of fistula you are having formed, the surgery usually takes between 45 and 90 minutes.

Where will my fistula be?

The most common sites for fistulas are at the wrist, elbow and upper arm. Your first fistula will be formed on your non-dominant arm if suitable vessels are found.

After Discharge

- During the time your block is working you will not be able to use your arm. You will probably be given a sling for support or protection.
- You may need someone to help look after you.
- Be careful around heat sources and avoid use of machinery and domestic appliances.
- Start taking your pain relief before the block wears off.
- Keep arm elevated on at least 2 pillows until swelling has reduced.
- Keep your fistula dressing clean and dry to prevent infection.
- Keep your arm and hand warm to encourage blood flow.
- Avoid any pressure on your arm or wrist as this may cause the thrill/buzz to stop or a clot form inside.

  This includes:
  - Tight clothing
  - Wrist watches/jewellery
  - Sleeping on your arm

- Avoid bending your elbow beyond 90 degrees for prolonged periods.
- Avoid any heavy lifting for the first 2 weeks to allow healing to take place.
- You will have a dressing covering the operation site, this will need to stay on for 48 hours and must be kept clean and dry.
- After 48 hours the dressing can be removed and you may shower, **providing you pat the wound dry carefully.**

Fistual Exercises

Once your stitches have been removed, if there were any and the wound has healed (around 2 weeks) you can begin fistula exercises, as explained and demonstrated at your Pre-Assessment Clinic visit.

These exercises are intended to strengthen and dilate the blood vessels of your fistula arm, helping your fistula to mature. This makes it easier to insert the needles for dialysis.

Exercises:

- Open and close your hand squeezing on a soft ball.
- This should be for no more than 2 minutes.
- Repeat the exercises four times a day.

When can my fistula be used?

It usually takes between 6-8 weeks for a fistula to mature and be strong enough for dialysis. However, if complications occur such as stenosis/narrowing it may take longer.

Things to remember:

- Contact the Vascular Access Team if you have any concerns.

DO NOT

- Allow blood samples to be taken from your fistula.
- Have your blood pressure taken on your fistula arm.
- Allow insertion of anything in your fistula arm including cannula/venflon.
- Carry heavy objects on your fistula arm.

Maintaining Skin Health:

- The frequent use of antiseptic skin cleansers and tapes occurring at each dialysis can lead to disruption in the normal barrier function of the skin. As a result skin can become itchy, sore, red and flaky. This can increase your risk of developing a skin infection. In order to maintain skin health we recommend that you apply a non-perfumed moisturiser to the skin on your fistula arm each day.

Patient Daily Check:

- Feel for thrill/buzz (should be present).
- Check for signs of:

  Infection:

  Redness
  Discharge/Pus
  Pain
- Changes in size or appearance of arm or fistula.
- Swelling or puffy arm or fistula.
- Discoloured (red, grey, blue) or cold hand.
- Numbness, tingling or cold feeling in the fistula arm.

Please Contact The Dialysis Unit

Do you know what to do if your fistula starts to bleed?

- Apply firm pressure at the bleeding point.
- Get Help.
- Lie Down.
- Elevate the bleeding arm or leg.
- If bleeding profusely call 999 immediately, if it is a slow bleed and you cannot get it to stop after 30 minutes call 999.
- Inform the dialysis unit about any bleeding that happens after every session.

Contact Details

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Pre-Dialysis Team
Telephone No: 0113 206 6719

8.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday

Male Renal Ward
Telephone No: 0113 206 9149

Female Renal Ward
Telephone No: 0113 206 9150

Your Dialysis Unit Contact Numbers

Huddersfield
Telephone No: 01484 355916

Calderdale
Telephone No: 01422 224008 or 222752

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Renal Secretaries
Telephone No: 01484 342026 or 347226
Vascular Secretaries
Telephone No: 01484 355414 or 355415

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں.

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"

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