

Dialysis Professional

“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom Weeks 1-2: Fistula Maturity Check



- Perform fistula maturity check at each treatment or when patient reports a change.
 - Reinforce to patient the importance of daily fistula checks.
 - Listen to the patient.

Look



Listen



Feel



Were there any abnormal findings during the fistula maturity check?

No

Document that there were no abnormal findings.

Yes

Document findings and refer to expert clinician.

Continued...

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Look

The dressing is clean and dry.

The skin around the dressing looks like it did before surgery. The hand looks the same as it did before surgery.

When the dressing is no longer needed, the surgery site is clean and dry.

Once it has healed, the skin over the fistula is all one color and looks like the skin around it.



The dressing is wet or soiled.
There is drainage on the dressing.

The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.

There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

Listen



Bruit: Listen with a stethoscope over the anastomosis.
This is where the artery is joined to the vein.

The bruit is audible.

There is no sound or the bruit is not as loud as the last time it was checked.

Feel

You can feel the fistula.



You cannot feel the fistula.
The hand of the affected arm is cold to the touch.

Continued...

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Feel



Thrill: A vibration or buzz that can be felt most prominently over the anastomosis; it will diminish along the length of the fistula.

The thrill **becomes stronger** as the fistula matures.

You **cannot feel the thrill** or it is **weaker than the last time it was checked**.

Pulse is a slight beating that feels like a heartbeat. Fingers placed lightly on the fistula should **move slightly**.

Pulsatile: The beat is **stronger than a normal pulse**. Fingers placed lightly on the fistula **rise and fall with each beat**.



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