

How to Keep Your Vascular Access Healthy



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AVF – The first choice for hemodialysis

Your AV Access is Your “Lifeline for a Lifetime”

Your access is so important that it is sometimes referred to as your “lifeline for a lifetime.” Proper care of your access is essential to ensure that it lasts and functions properly. Here are some important tips that may help your access last longer.

DO:

- ✓ Wash the skin over your access with soap and water every day.
- ✓ Conduct your daily one minute access check.
- ✓ Tell your care team if you see a bruise or feel a change in the skin over your access.
- ✓ Rotate needle sites at each treatment.

DO NOT:

- ✗ Wear tight-fitting clothing or jewelry that will put pressure on your access arm.
- ✗ Carry heavy objects across the arm (e.g., a purse or briefcase) that will compress the access.
- ✗ Have blood drawn, blood pressure checks or IVs started in your access arm.
- ✗ Scratch or pick at any scabs on your access.
- ✗ Sleep or rest your head on your access arm.

If your access starts to bleed A LOT, it's important that you take the following steps:

- **First try to STOP THE BLEEDING**
- **Try to stay calm.** Don't panic. It will make your heart pump faster and you will bleed more.
- **Apply constant, firm pressure.**
Use a clean cloth or your fingers.
 - If the access is in your arm, keep your arm up above your heart to slow the bleeding.
 - If your access is in your leg, put pressure on your mid-groin.
- **Do NOT let go of the pressure.** You could start to bleed again.
- **CALL 911!** If possible, have someone call. If you are alone, when bleeding slows or stops, tie a clean cloth firmly over the main part of your access, then call.



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