

Dialysis Professional

“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom Weeks 7-10: 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



Arm Elevation test
(AVF Only)



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.

Expert Clinician:

Assess each access monthly or more often if problems are reported.

Continued...

Dialysis Professional

“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom Weeks 7-10: Fistula Maturity Check



Look

The hand **looks the same** as it did before surgery.

The skin over the fistula is **uniform in appearance** and **looks like the skin around it**.



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

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**.

You hear the bruit along the cannulation segment.

The bruit **sounds like a “whoosh,”** or for some, like a **drum beat**.

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

Sound is **different** from what a normal bruit should sound like.

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.

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

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

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

Continued...

Dialysis Professional

“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom Weeks 7-10: Fistula Maturity Check



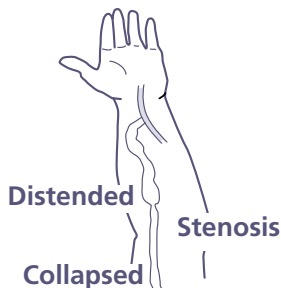
Arm Elevation

Lower Arm Fistula

The fistula outflow vein **collapses** when the arm is raised above the level of the heart.

Upper Arm Fistula

The fistula outflow vein **partially collapses** when the arm is raised above the level of the heart. It may **feel “flabby”** when palpated.



Lower Arm Fistula

The fistula outflow vein **does not collapse** after the arm is raised above the level of the heart. This may mean there is a problem allowing the blood to flow from the fistula.

Upper Arm Fistula

The fistula outflow vein **does not collapse partially or become “flabby”** after being raised above the level of the heart. This may mean there is a problem allowing the blood to flow from the fistula.



www.esrdncc.org

This material was prepared by the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) National Coordinating Center (NCC) contractor, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under CMS contract #: HHSM-500-2013-NW002C; and was adapted by the contractor under CMS contract #: HHSM-500-2016-00007C. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy nor imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Publication Number: FL-ESRD NCC-7N1T02-10032016-06

