

## Renal Services

# Everything I need to know about going home with a vascular catheter

## Introduction

A dialysis catheter has been inserted into your body to allow haemodialysis to take place. The catheter travels a few inches below the skin in a tunnel so that it is more secure and comfortable. Blood is taken out from one of the big veins inside your body through the catheter to be 'cleaned' through the dialysis machine before being returned to the body through the catheter again.

Great care must be taken to avoid infection, bleeding or clotting of the catheter. When attending the Renal Unit for dialysis, the nursing staff will attend to the care of the catheter. At all other times, you will be responsible for the care of your dialysis catheter

## Care of your dialysis catheter

### Keeping the exit site clean and dry

- Avoid touching the area with your hands
- Immediately after insertion of the catheter, a small circular dressing will be applied around the vascular catheter where it comes out of the body, this is called a biopatch dressing; then a clear breathable sterile dressing will be applied over the biopatch.
- The biopatch and clear dressing will be changed every 7 days by the dialysis nurses.
- If you have any allergies to the dressings your dialysis nurses will change you over to other dressings, these may need to be changed at each dialysis.



## Personal hygiene

- No part of the catheter should be immersed in water. Baths and swims are therefore not recommended
- Showers are allowed once the exit site has healed. The dressing can stay in place during a shower as it is waterproof
- Do not use sponges or flannels to clean around the catheter. They allow bugs to grow. Use running water only
- Ensure you dry around the dressing site with a clean dry towel

## Other precautions

- Do not disturb the dressing
- Do not pull on, pinch, poke or bend the catheter
- Be careful when using sharp instruments like scissors and razors near the catheter
- Do not expose the catheter to pets and children
- Do not expose the catheter to UV radiation - this will occur in sun bathing

## When to ring the Haemodialysis Unit for advice?

**Immediately** in any of the following situations:

- If you feel worried about the catheter in any way
- If you feel unwell and you suspect the catheter is the cause
- If you have any of these signs that the catheter may be infected
  - The exit site is red, swollen, sore or discharging pus
  - The skin below the tunnel is red, swollen, sore or discharging pus
  - You feel cold, shivery or have rigors (whole body shaking)
  - You have a raised temperature
- The catheter falls out: Press **immediately** on the exit site until the bleeding stops
- The catheter displaces itself: Do not try to push catheter back in or pull it out. You must tape the catheter securely in position
- Bleeding from catheter site: Check clamps on line are closed. **Immediately** press on the exit site until the bleeding stops. If the bleeding continues, call 999 or arrange to come straight to the Emergency Department

## Help lines

024 7696 7777 (Renal Unit: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7- 10.30 and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 7- 7)

024 7696 8256 / 024 7696 8258 (Ward 50 at night and on Sundays)

## For Home Haemodialysis Patients

Please contact in the first instance:

Home Haemodialysis Team on 01788 663228

## General Advice and Consent

Most of your questions may have been answered by this leaflet but remember that this is only the starting point for discussion with your healthcare team.

Before any doctor, nurse or therapist examines or treats you, they must seek your consent or permission. In order to make a decision you need to have the information from health professionals about the treatment or investigation which is being offered to you. You should always ask them more questions if you do not understand or if you want more information.

The information you receive should be about your condition, the alternatives available to you, and whether it carries risks as well as benefits.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 8264 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

### Document History

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