



Contact:



Plymouth Dialysis Unit:
01752 431700



NHS 111 if you need advice



999 for an ambulance in an emergency

Date issued: February 2022

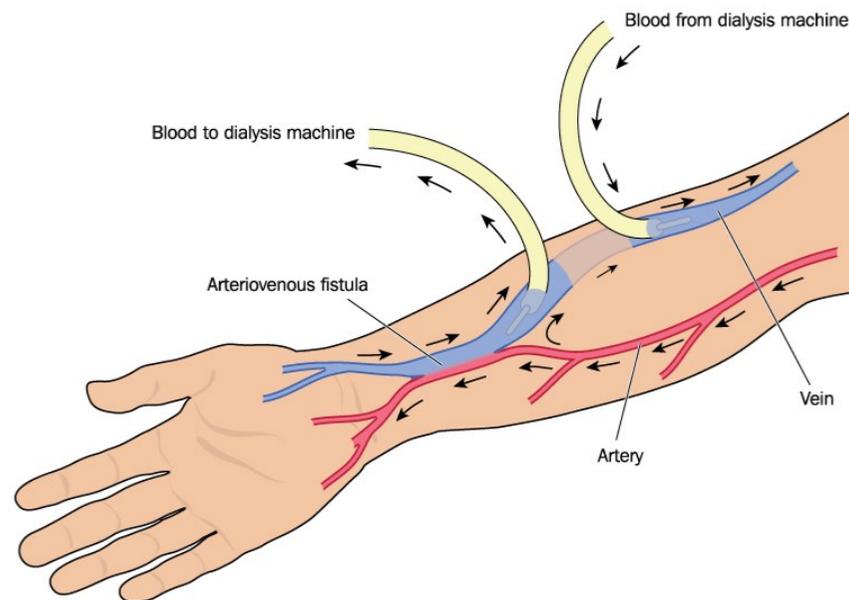
For review: February 2024

Ref: C-482/JS/Learning Disability Team/Your AVF

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Your AVF:



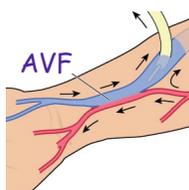
Why you need an AVF:



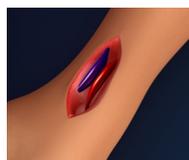
Your kidneys are not working and your body needs help to clean your blood.



A special unit called a dialysis machine can do this for you.



To be able to use the machine you need to have an arteriovenous fistula. As this is hard to say we are going to shorten it to AVF.



An AVF needs to be made in your arm. You will have to have a small procedure to join a vein and artery together. (These carry your blood).



You will be given a local anaesthetic. This means your arm will be numbed. Although you will be awake you will not feel anything.



- If your hand on the side of your AVF feels cold, is painful or tingles (feels like you've touched a stinging nettle)

In case of a bleeding emergency:



Sometimes your AVF can bleed a little when you get home after dialysis. If you cannot stop it bleeding you must:



- Shout for help and get some one to be with you
- Phone 999 and tell them you are bleeding from a dialysis fistula



- Push down firmly on the bleed using two fingers or a bottle top (empty space over the bleed)



- Lie on the floor with your arm above your head until help comes



- Don't loop the handles of shopping bags or baskets on this arm



- Try not to sleep on this arm

Things to tell your nurse



It is important to tell a nurse or HCA if:



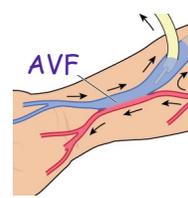
- You have bumped your AVF causing it to swell or bruise



- Your AVF has become red, itchy or hot



- If you don't feel the thrill or buzz each day



The new AVF needs to be big enough so the dialysis machine can clean your blood. This is a slow process and takes 6-8 weeks to grow to the right size.



You may be asked to come in for this procedure several months before your dialysis is due to start. This is to make sure your AVF is ready.



You will see a lump in your arm where the AVF is.

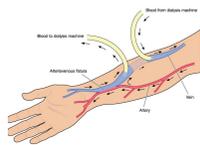


Use this space for any questions you may have:

How your AVF works:



Two dialysis needles are put into your AVF by a nurse or health care assistant (HCA).



Your blood flows along the bottom needle; goes in and around the dialysis machine and enters back into your body through the top needle.



It is important that you do this three times a week.



Each treatment lasts 4 hours.



When dialysis is over the needles will be taken out. You will bleed a little afterwards but this is quite normal.

Looking after your AVF:



It is important to look after your AVF and the arm it is in:



- Keep the skin around your AVF clean and always wash it before dialysis



- Check the buzz or thrill each day



- Do not let doctors or nurses check your blood pressure on this arm



- Avoid wearing tight clothing or watches on this arm