



Hemodialysis and Fistula

Dialysis is used to treat patients with End-Stage Renal Disease. End-Stage Renal Disease is when the kidneys suddenly stop working. Dialysis is a procedure in which waste is removed from the blood when the kidneys can no longer do their job. There are different types of renal dialysis, the most common is Hemodialysis.

What is Hemodialysis?

- Hemodialysis draws blood from the body and is sent through a special filter. The filter helps eliminate harmful substances. The blood is then returned to the body.
- Eliminates extra salt, water, and waste so that they do not accumulate in your body.
- Maintains safe levels of minerals and vitamins in your body.
- Helps control blood pressure.
- Helps produce red blood cells.

What is a Vascular Access?

- Vascular access is an opening made under your skin and blood vessel for the hemodialysis process.
- In a short surgery, an artery is attached to a vein, usually in the arm. After a few months, they form a connection called a fistula (arteriovenous fistula or AVF). This type has a lower risk of infections and lasts longer.

What happens during Hemodialysis?

- During dialysis, your blood flows through the access to the hemodialysis machine.
- As the blood passes through one part of the filter, a special liquid in the other part removes the waste from the blood.
- Once your blood has been filtered into the machine, it flows back through the access in your body.

Where is Hemodialysis performed?

- Hemodialysis is usually done in a special dialysis center.
- Generally, the treatment is performed approximately three (3) times a week, lasting 3 to 4 hours each time.
- You may feel tired for several hours after dialysis.
- In a treatment center, doctors and nurses will take care of all your needs.
- It is important to schedule your appointments and follow a dialysis diet.
- Talk to your doctor about other treatment alternatives.

When to visit your doctor?

- Bleeding where the vascular access is located.
- Signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, tenderness, pain, heat, or pus (yellowish fluid).
- Fever above 100.5° F (38° C).
- The access arm is swollen.
- Your hand becomes cold, numb, or weak.
- Itching, trouble sleeping, diarrhea or constipation, nausea, or vomiting that lasts more than two (2) days.

Care of your Fistula

- Avoid all pressure on the access arm. If the fistula coagulates, a new one may be needed.
- Do not allow anyone to take a blood pressure reading on the same arm of the access.
- Do not wear tight clothing around the access or arm.
- Avoid putting pressure on the arm that has the access while sleeping and when you are lifting heavy objects.

Remember

- Dialysis is used to treat patients whose kidneys stop working.
- Hemodialysis eliminates harmful substances in the blood so that they do not accumulate in your body.
- Vascular access is an opening made in the skin and blood vessel for the hemodialysis process.
- Call your doctor if you have signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, tenderness, pain, heat, or pus (yellowish fluid).
- Do not allow anyone to take a blood pressure reading on the same arm of the access.

Contact your Primary Physician

If you are diagnosed with End-Stage Renal Disease, you will be registered under the Special Coverage of the Vital Plan. Your primary doctor and/or your specialist can provide information about the benefits of the Special Coverage, and how you will be registered under this coverage.

People with Special Coverage can get prescription drugs, tests or other services, without needing a referral or having their primary doctor sign. The Special Coverage of the Vital Plan starts from the date of diagnosis and will be effective as long as the beneficiary is eligible for the Vital Plan.

In addition, you can contact your primary physician for more information or counseling on how you and your family can address physical and emotional concerns about the hemodialysis process.

Important

If you need emergency services, you can dial 9-1-1 or go to any Emergency Room.

If you have any symptoms that you understand require immediate attention, before visiting an Emergency Room, you can contact the Medical Advice Line toll-free at 1-844-347-7801, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) Days of the week. TTY / TDD users should call 1-844-347-7804. By calling the Medical Advice Line before visiting an Emergency Room, you will be exempt from paying the copayment for services received during your visit to the Emergency Room.

For more information

Customer Service Department
1-844-347-7800
TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7805

Visit our website
www.firstmedicalvital.com

Reference

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000707.htm>

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007434.htm>

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002365.htm>