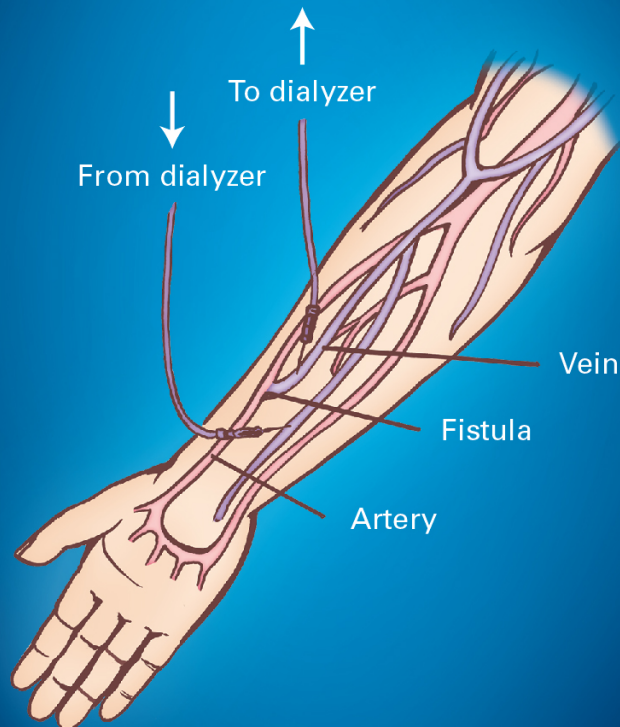


Arterio Venous Fistula

AVF-The First Choice for Hemodialysis Patients



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What is an AV Fistula?

An arteriovenous fistula (AV fistula) is the surgical connection of a vein and an artery, usually in the forearm, either right or left to allow access to the vascular system for hemodialysis – a procedure that performs the functions of the kidneys (cleaning the body by removing waste and excess water from the body) in people whose kidneys have failed.

How important is AV Fistula?

Patients on long terms dialysis have to understand that the fistula is their lifeline and care of the fistula is of utmost importance. Any problem with the fistula can lead to serious emergency.

How long will the AV Fistula last?

An AV Fistula lasts for as long as it is taken care of. It requires personal care by the patient himself so that no pressure is applied onto Fistula. Also the team performing the dialysis needs to ensure that proper care is taken at the time of needle insertion & removal. If good care is taken, the fistula can last for years.

Why are you recommended an AV Fistula?

Your physician can diagnose weak kidneys and can also anticipate if the kidneys will be at risk of complete failure. Dialysis treatment will be required and for the dialysis to be done, some form of connecting point is needed in the body from where blood can be easily removed and then put back in after dialysis. Such a connection is called AV Fistula.

Who performs the procedure and

Where is it performed?

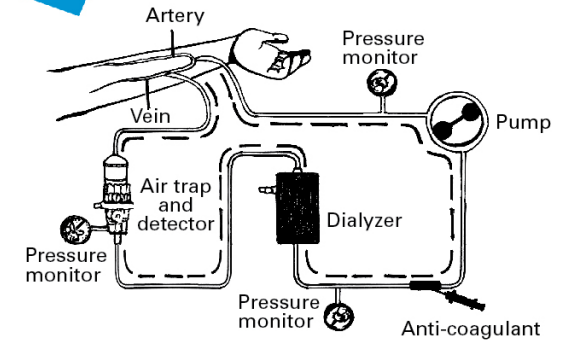
The surgery to create an arteriovenous fistula for vascular access in hemodialysis is performed by a specialized surgeon in a hospital or one-day surgery center. It requires only local anesthesia and can be performed as an outpatient procedure.

What is the function of AV Fistula?

The surgical creation of an AV fistula provides a long-lasting site through which blood can be removed and returned during hemodialysis. The fistula, which allows the person to be connected to a dialysis machine, must be prepared by a surgeon 6-8 weeks before, to heal and mature prior to dialysis. When the vein and artery are joined, the vein gradually becomes larger and stronger and better for Dialysis.

What the patient feels with Fistula?

The arm with fistula often feels warmer and slightly more swollen than the opposite arm and also, a special vibration can be detected by placing the fingers on the fistula side. If this vibration is not felt, it may indicate malfunction of the fistula and therefore contact your doctor immediately.



How to care for the Fistula maturation?

- After 3-4 days, your doctor may tell you some forearm exercise. Regular exercise will ensure appropriate maturation.
- Patient return to the doctor for removal of stitches after 10 days.
- Your fistula will take 4-6 weeks to mature before it can be used for purpose of dialysis. Premature use may lead to early blockage of fistula.

What are the complications?

Immediately contact your doctor or come to The Kidney Centre emergency department in case of any problem with the fistula such as:

- Pain, burning, redness
- Unusual swelling
- Bleeding from fistula side
- Special vibration over the fistula cannot be felt

How to preserve and protect AV Fistula:

- Avoid using Fistula arm for any heavy work. You can use the arm for daily works, e.g. washing face, toilet use, changing clothes etc.
- Keep the fistula side clean and avoid scratching the fistula side at all times to prevent infection.
- Keep your nails short to avoid any accidental scratching.
- While sleeping avoid turning on the fistula arm side or placing the fistula arm under the pillow/head.
- Avoid injections, intravenous (IV) needles or fluids, or taking blood samples in the Fistula arm and avoid tight bandage, wrist watch, bangles etc.
- Needle insertions for hemodialysis treatments should be rotated so that one spot is not repeatedly stuck and weakened.
- Do not take blood pressure or put pressure on the access arm.
- Advise patients to avoid wearing jewelry or tight clothing, sleeping on, or lifting heavy objects with the access arm.
- Check the temperature and color of the fingers and the pulse of the access arm for adequate circulation. Keep it clean & dry between the treatments.
- Check for signs of infection at the fistula arm.

Remember that fistula is your life line!