

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why should I get an AV Fistula?

AVF's with proper care tend to last the longest for dialysis and require fewer interventions.

### 2. How do I get an AV Fistula?

You may initiate this discussion with the physician or nurse in your dialysis clinic.

### 3. I don't like needles, how do I cope with the pain & fear?

There is no denying that an AV Fistula requires the insertion of two needles into the access site. You might ask your clinic or physician if smaller needles can be used or as many patients do, learn to place your own needles. Please inquire with clinic staff about the "Buttonhole" technique. You might also try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing exercises.

### 4. How do I care for my AV Fistula after my dialysis treatment?

You will be required to hold pressure at the needle sites to stop the bleeding. Keeping it clean is very important. You will also monitor your access on "off" dialysis days for the "thrill" or buzzing associated with your AV Fistula.

## 5 Reasons to Consider an A-V Fistula:

1. Fewer infections
2. Fewer hospitalizations
3. Fewer problems with clotting
4. Better blood flow for better treatments
5. Usually last years, compared to weeks or months for other access types

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To learn more about AV Fistulas and which vascular access option may be right for you, please visit the following websites:

[www.esrdnet15.org](http://www.esrdnet15.org)  
[www.nwrenalnetwork.org](http://www.nwrenalnetwork.org)  
[www.esrdnet17.org](http://www.esrdnet17.org)  
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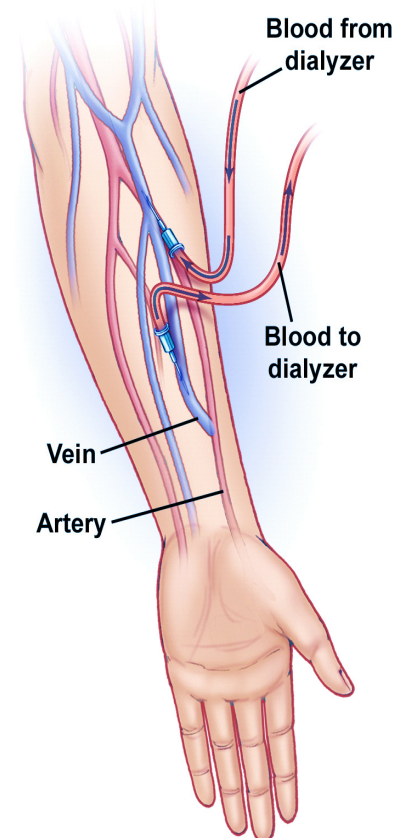
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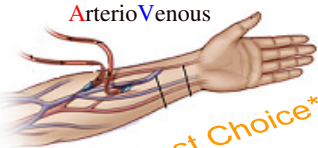
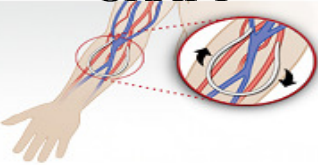
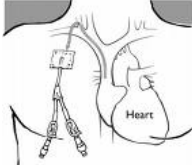
## ArterioVenous Fistula

Arteriovenous fistula



**Northwest Renal Network**  
4702 42nd Avenue SW  
Seattle, WA 98116  
Tel: 206-923-0714

# Vascular Access Types for Hemodialysis

TYPE	LOCATION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>FISTULA</b> ArterioVenous  ***Best Choice***	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forearm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upper Arm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thigh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lasts many years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less infection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High blood flows <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fewer complications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Takes the longest to mature or develop <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May fail to mature or develop due to other health issues
<b>GRAFT</b> 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forearm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upper Arm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thigh <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chest <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Straight or Loop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be used in 2 weeks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Used in people when a fistula does not work <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Used in people with special health issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clotting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Swelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frequent interventions required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May affect blood flow to the hand (Steal Syndrome)
<b>CATHETER</b>  **Should be avoided**	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neck (Jugular Vein) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Groin (Femoral Vein) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chest (Subclavian)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be used in an emergency (Must have chest X-ray for placement) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be used while other access types mature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clotting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower blood flow rates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vessel damage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designed for short-term use only *Charts were adapted from Networks 16 and 18.

“When I felt very ill back in 2001, I went to several doctors to find out what was wrong; they were unable to pinpoint why I felt weak and sick until finally one doctor told me, ‘Your kidneys have failed.’ I had known they were weak for several years but was surprised they had actually quit. This doctor said, ‘You have such high levels of toxins in your blood that you need to dialyze as soon as possible.’ I was stunned. Dialysis looked horrible, being dependent on a machine, not to mention all that blood. It was a very difficult time in my life and I wondered if life would still be worth living. I was so sick that I needed a temporary catheter put in my chest just to start treatment. At the same time they put in the catheter just to start treatment, they also put in what is called a fistula.

Having a fistula is very, very important to the

quality of your life. A fistula is the joining, usually a few inches above your wrist, of a vein to an artery in your arm. Fistulas take at least 8 weeks to be ready for use but are far superior to catheters. I began dialysis using the temporary catheter and started feeling better after the first few treatments.

Eight weeks later, out came the catheter and I started using my fistula. It allowed much more effective treatment. I continued to get even better and now am healthy and have a fulfilling life-style. If you would like to take advantage of my experience, the most important thing you can do is have a fistula put in as soon as your doctor will allow it. It will pay off for you.”

-Ray Svela \*

- Formerly an ESRD patient of the Network #15 Patient Advisory Committee.

## Faces of Dialysis

