



Northwest Renal Network

Helping Navigate Kidney Disease

Patient Bulletin



Our mission is to promote optimal dialysis and transplant care for kidney patients in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington

We Can Help With:

Care concerns

Patient rights

Transplant

Treatment options

Travel and dialysis

Questions about employment

Access to our library of resources

What is Self-Care Dialysis?

You may have heard the term **self-care dialysis** and wondered what that is and if you could do it. Self-care dialysis originally involved the patient doing dialysis at home with a trained helper. Now patients who dialyze in a facility (in-center) can have the opportunity to participate in self-care. For instance, you may set up your dialysis machine, insert needles into your access, and put yourself on the machine. There are other things you may do such as check your own blood pressure and weight during your dialysis treatment.

Many patients enjoy self-care, and feel more in control of their disease. Patients who stick themselves find it easier than having a nurse stick them, when he or she may be unfamiliar with the access. ***If you are interested in self-care, talk with the staff at your facility.***



Using the Buttonhole Technique for Your AV Fistula

The **buttonhole technique** is another way of cannulating (putting needles in) your fistula. It requires putting needles in the same spot at the same angle and depth every time they are inserted. Research has shown that, with the buttonhole technique, patients have:

- Fewer infiltrations (swelling from the needle going through the fistula wall);
- Fewer missed attempts to place needles; and
- Less pain when inserting needles.

The buttonhole site must be carefully cleaned prior to cannulation to prevent infections. There are dialysis patients who have been using this technique for over 20 years with the same AV fistula!

Check with your nephrologist or dialysis nurse to see if this technique would work for your access.

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