



CENTER FOR VASCULAR DISEASES
901 South Main Street
Fall River, MA 02724
(508) 673-4329
www.centerforvasculardiseases.com

AV Fistula or Graft Surgery

Activity

- You may resume normal daily activity as you feel able.
- No strenuous activity or lifting of heavy objects until you are cleared by your surgeon.
- You may drive when you feel well enough, as long as you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.
- You may shower 72 hours after the procedure. No tub baths or swimming until the incision is completely healed.

Care for Your Incision

- Your incision was closed with dissolvable sutures. The skin is then closed with steri strips, pieces of paper tape. The steri strips should fall off in 7 days. If they do not fall off you may remove them after 7 days.
- Your incision was closed with sutures or staples. These will be removed at a follow up visit.
- It is normal for the incisions to be slightly tender, pink and bruised. If you notice increased swelling, tenderness, warmth, redness or drainage of pus you should notify your surgeon's office.

Pain

- You will be given pain medication
- Pain medication can cause constipation. In addition to increasing the amount of water that you drink, over the counter medication can be used (Colace, Milk of Magnesia, Dulcolax)

Special Instructions

- Do not restrict the blood flow through the fistula/ graft. Avoid wearing tight clothing, hanging things over the arm, or carrying heavy objects with the arm that the fistula/ graft was placed.
- Check for blood flow through the fistula/graft several times daily by feeling for a vibration or "buzzing" feeling over the fistula/ graft (this is called a thrill).
- Exercise the operative arm for 10-15 minutes several times a day. This can be accomplished by squeezing a rubber ball or lifting a 1 pound weight, such as a soup can. This will promote enlargement of the vein.

Using the Fistula / Graft for Dialysis

- It takes a number of weeks for the fistula or graft to heal well enough to be used for dialysis.
 - A **fistula**, is a natural connection between the artery and vein, will take approximately 12 weeks before it is ready to be used.
 - A **graft**, is a synthetic connection between artery and vein, will be ready for use in approximately 2-3 weeks.



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- If you have a dialysis catheter in place, you must wait until your fistula/graft is cleared for use by your surgeon. Once it is used for one week without any problems, we can schedule you for removal of your catheter.

When to Call Your Physician

- Fevers greater than 101.5 F or chills
- Redness, increased swelling, tenderness or drainage of pus from incision
- Severe or unusual arm pain, numbness, coldness, or weakness
- Absence of the vibration or buzzing feeling in the fistula/graft