

Touch, Look, and Care everyday—Your fistula or graft is your lifeline for dialysis.

Follow these simple steps to keep it healthy and working well.

Touch

- Feel your access with your fingers every day
- You should feel a buzz, or vibration, from the blood rushing through
- Some patients say it feels like a cat purring
- If you don't feel the buzz, call your access surgeon right away

Look

- Look at your access every day for redness, swelling, pus
- If your hand or fingers are numb, cold, or blue/gray colored, call your access surgeon right away

Care

- Keep your access clean—wash your arm daily and before hemodialysis
- Don't wear Coban elastic/adhesive wrap for extended periods of time as this may cause harm to your access
- Don't wear tight clothing, jewelry, or watch band over your access
- Don't sleep on your access arm
- Don't carry anything heavy on top of your access
- Don't let anyone take blood pressure, draw blood, or start an IV line with your access arm

If you have a new fistula, exercise will help it grow

- For a lower arm fistula, squeeze a ball or rolled-up sock for 10 minutes several times a day
- For an upper arm fistula, do 10 elbow bends holding a light weight (like a can or bottle) several times a day