



TLC for Your Fistula or Graft

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 dialysis
- 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 or jewelry 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