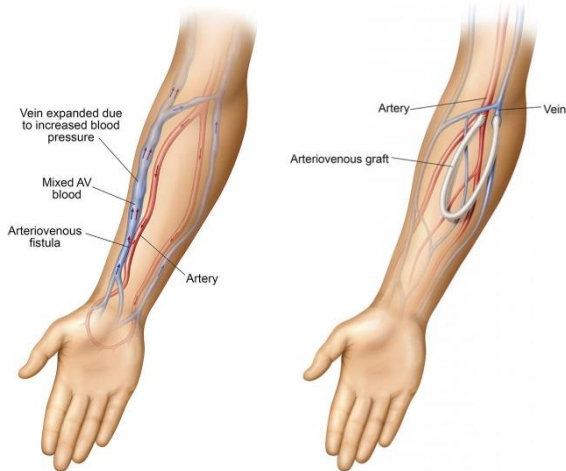


Your vascular access allows you to get the treatment you need. Some may even call it their “lifeline”. It is important to take care of it to protect your health and to make sure your access is useful for as long as possible.

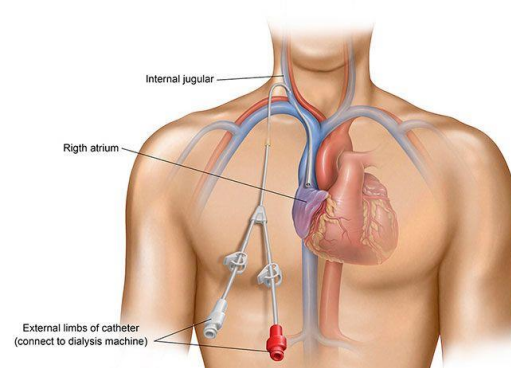
## Caring for your AV fistula or AV graft



Since AV fistulas and grafts are under your skin, they are less likely to have problems with infection than catheters. However, they can become infected and they can have problems with blood flow. Take these steps to keep your AV fistula or graft working well:

- Keep your vascular access clean at all times.
- Avoid putting pressure on your access area by NOT:
  - Sleeping or resting on your access area
  - Carrying bags or heavy objects across your access area
  - Wearing tight clothes or jewelry around your access area
- For routine blood tests, ask for your blood to be taken from your other arm (whichever arm does not have your vascular access in it).

## Caring for your catheter



If you have a venous or tunneled catheter, you are more likely to have problems with blood clots and infections. Here are some steps you can take to help prevent problems:

- Wash your hands before you touch any part of your catheter or the dressing over the catheter.
- Keep dressing over catheter clean and dry
- Call your dialysis center or your doctor if
  - Dressing gets dirty
  - Dressing falls off
  - Clamps are open
  - Caps come off

*If you notice any signs of infection or any problems with any type of vascular access, contact your doctor, nurse or dialysis center right away. Look for signs of infection, such as:*

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling
- Fever
- Discharge (oozing) from the incision