

Q: I am happy with my catheter. Why should I undergo an operation to get another access?

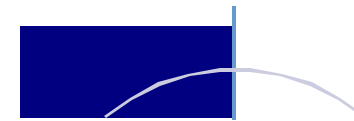
A: Your catheter is not an ideal access. Have you had an infected catheter? If not, your chances of getting one are high. Do you feel your dialysis time is too long? It is difficult to obtain sufficient blood flow with a catheter. Therefore your treatment time is usually longer with a catheter than with a fistula. Your catheter may also cause your chest or neck veins to get narrowed and cause arm or neck swelling. Swimming and bathing is limited or not recommended with a catheter.

REMEMBER:

According to recent studies, patients who began hemodialysis with a catheter had a lower survival rate than those who began with a fistula. When discussing your access options with your Nephrologist and Surgeon, think **FISTULA FIRST!**



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Choosing Your Vascular Access:

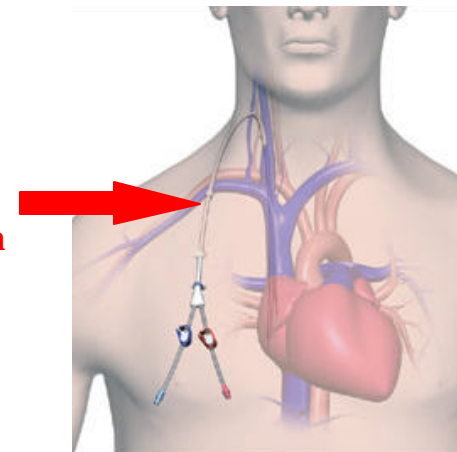
First Choice: Fistula

Second Choice: Graft

ONLY if you have no other choice: Catheter



Did you know that this tube is in your heart?



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If a patient requires urgent dialysis and an access has not been established, a catheter is placed as a **TEMPORARY** vascular access.



According to recent studies:

- ? The risk of infection with a catheter is approximately **22** times higher than with a fistula.
- ? The **second** leading cause of death in dialysis patients is infection.
- ? The death rate is approximately **23%** higher in patients who began dialysis with a catheter than patients who began with a fistula.
- ? The risk of a catheter infection **greatly increases** with frequent handling and the presence of the fibrin sheath.
- ? A film begins to form on the catheter within as little as 24 hours following insertion. This film forms a way for bacteria to grow.
- ? Only approximately **73%** of catheters could regularly reach a blood flow of 400 ml/min. A poor blood flow can result in patients not receiving enough dialysis or requiring a longer dialysis session. Studies show that not receiving enough dialysis increases the patient death rate.

CATHETER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is a catheter?

A: A catheter is a flexible, hollow tube which is tunneled through your skin near your collar bone and goes into a large vein to your **heart**.

Q: Are there any risk to having a catheter placed?

A: There is a risk of damage to your heart and/or blood vessels at the time the catheter is placed.



Q: Why do I have a catheter?

A: You probably needed dialysis immediately and did not have time for a fistula or graft to be placed surgically or allow time for your fistula to mature. Or you may have had a fistula or graft clot or fail in the past.

Q: I have had a graft or fistula that either clotted or failed before. Why did this happen?

A: Several possible reasons:

Your veins may have been too small for a fistula to develop. You may be a candidate for venous mapping, which can be ordered by your doctor and involves an ultrasound of your arms to see if your veins would accept a fistula.
