



Emergency bleeding from an Arteriovenous Fistula (AVF) or Arteriovenous Graft (AVG)

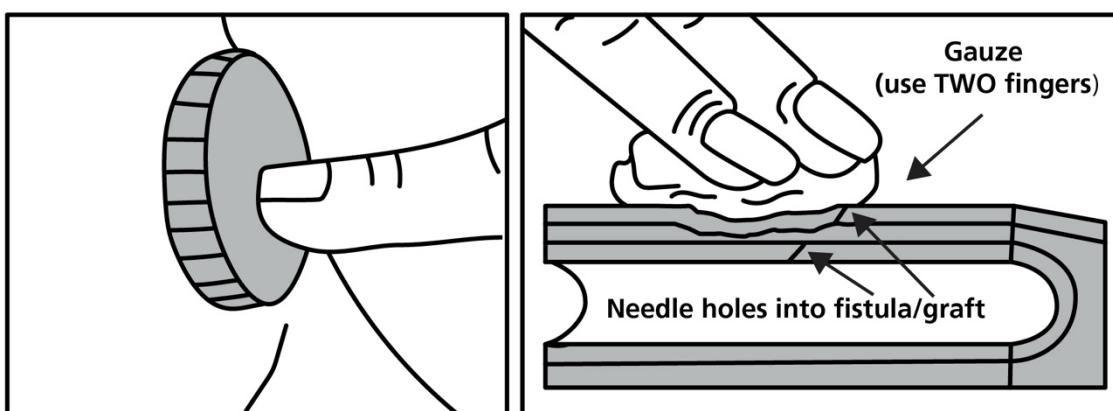
Introduction

A fistula or graft is the preferred “access” for dialysis, to get blood to the machine, because there is less likelihood of problems. However, you should be aware that occasionally a fistula may bleed a little after the plaster is removed at home, if this happens it should stop quickly when pressure is applied.

However, although it is a very rare occurrence, you should be aware of the actions to take if profuse bleeding occurs from a fistula or graft site unexpectedly between dialysis sessions.

What to do

- **This is a medical emergency.**
Seek help urgently from anyone who is around. The blood flow can be fast and make you feel faint so do not delay in alerting others.
- Dial 999 and report “excessive bleeding from a dialysis fistula”.
- Apply firm pressure over the bleeding site, use gauze and **TWO** fingers, or a milk bottle top or similar can help localise pressure over the bleeding site.



- **Do not** use too large a dressing: For example a towel may stop you applying enough pressure in the right place.
- If the bleeding is not controlled by you pressing on it, then lie down and ask someone to help by supporting your arm over your head. Check you are pressing in the right place.

- Stay calm; Bleeding can usually be stopped with enough pressure in the right place. It may take more pressure than usual if the bleeding is not easily controlled.
- If bleeding stops before help arrives, it is important that your fistula is still checked urgently as bleeding should not happen between dialysis sessions. You should attend hospital so your fistula can be checked by a fistula surgeon. Also tell your dialysis unit

Please be aware this is a rare occurrence but it is important that you and your family know how to act if it should occur. Being aware of signs of complications and reporting these promptly should ensure you do not experience a bleeding emergency.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this patient information leaflet please speak to your Kidney Failure Team or your nurse at the dialysis unit.

Accessibility

To view this information in a different language or use the text-to-speech reader visit www.uhb.nhs.uk, click the yellow and black circular icon in the bottom right of the web page to open the ReachDeck toolbar and then use the search bar to search by the name of the leaflet. If you require this information in another format such as braille or audio please email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.



How did we do?

If you have recently used our services we'd love to hear about your experience. Please scan the QR code or follow the link to share your feedback to help us improve our services. Thank you! www.uhb.nhs.uk/fft

