

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

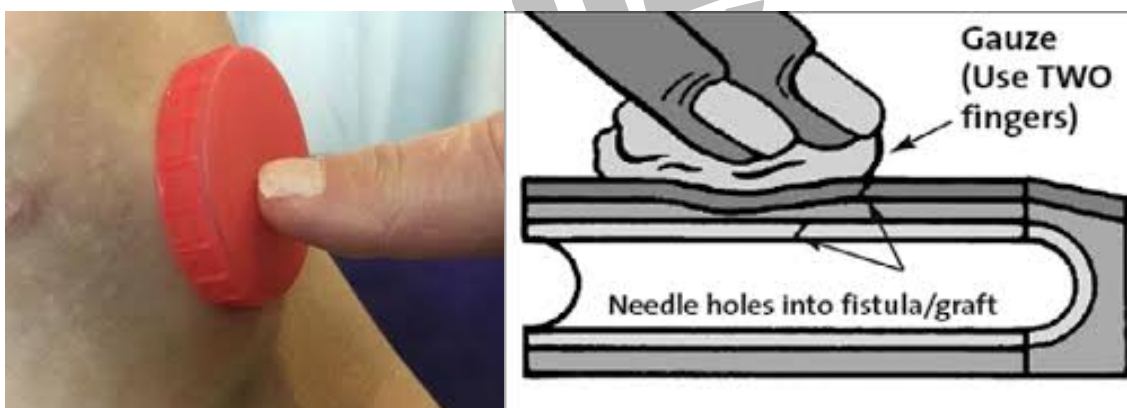
### Introduction

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.

## Information for Patients

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- 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 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.

### **Our commitment to confidentiality**

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

### **Additional Sources of Information:**

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

### **You may want to email our Health Information Centre:**

[Health.Informationcentre@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:Health.Informationcentre@uhb.nhs.uk).

### **Dear Patient**

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

- Patient Information Feedback email: [PatientInformation.LeafletFeedback@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:PatientInformation.LeafletFeedback@uhb.nhs.uk)

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

- Patient Opinion: [www.patientopinion.org.uk](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk)
- I want great care: [www.iwantgreatcare.org](http://www.iwantgreatcare.org) (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about our patient information and this hospital and how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the sites.

**If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or your treatment or if there is anything you do not understand and you wish to know more about please write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.**