



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Care of your haemodialysis catheter

Introduction

This leaflet contains guidance and advice on caring for your dialysis catheter. You will also receive individual instructions on how to care for your catheter. Please read this information and discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor or nurse.

How to care for your dialysis catheter?

Your dialysis line will need special care and attention to prevent infection. You will need to look out for the following signs on a daily basis:

- Soreness, redness or swelling around the catheter site
- Discharge or leakage from the insertion site
- Raised temperature or feeling unwell with flu like symptoms

If you do have any of the symptoms above while you are attending for dialysis treatment, then please let your dialysis nurse know straight away.

If you are at home and have any of these symptoms, please telephone either of the numbers at the end of this leaflet for advice.

If your dialysis catheter becomes loose or falls out, immediately apply pressure to the site where your line exits your body and contact the Emergency Services on 999.

If one of the clamps comes off, you must contact Ward 7b and follow the instructions given by the nursing staff. The telephone number is at the end of the leaflet.

If one of the connectors at the end of your dialysis line comes off, make sure that the clamp is closed then contact Ward 7b for advice. You must follow the instructions given by the nursing staff.

There are 2 sets of stitches for a tunnelled catheter. Those at the insertion site can be removed after 7 to 10 days. Those at the exit site from the tunnel should stay in place for 6 to 8 weeks.

The stitches will be removed at the Dialysis Unit or on Ward 7b.

If these stitches break or fall out before the 6 to 8 weeks or the 'cuff' is visible, please contact your haemodialysis unit straight away.

Care of your dialysis catheter

Your dialysis catheter is very important to your treatment and there are several things you can do to help care for it.

Do

- Keep the surgical site clean and dry until completely healed. The dressing will be changed weekly by the dialysis nurse. Please contact your dialysis nurse if the dressing falls off or needs replacing
- Make sure that the clamps and caps remain closed at all times
- Make sure that you clean your shower head weekly. Showers and spray taps must be cleaned regularly as there is a large surface area for bacteria to breed. Parts of the shower head encourage a build-up of

scale and slime. The shower hose is usually left full of warm water after use, so if not in daily use you should run water through the hose for at least 3 minutes before taking a shower

Do not

- Allow nursing or medical staff to use your dialysis line for anything other than for dialysis without speaking to the renal consultant on call (except in emergency situations)
- Pinch, poke, bend or pull at your dialysis catheter
- Use sharp objects, such as scissors, around your catheter
- Get your catheter wet, the dressing is waterproof but try not to get too much water on it. You can shower or take a bath, but you should not submerge your dialysis catheter, so do not go swimming
- Use a sun bed

Contact information

Cotswold Dialysis Unit

Tel: 0300 422 6848

Monday to Saturday, 7:00am to 6:00pm

Severn Dialysis Unit

Tel: 0300 422 6077

Monday to Saturday, 7:00am to 6:00pm

Forest Dialysis Unit

Tel: 0300 422 8762

Monday to Saturday, 7:00am to
4:00pm

Outside of these hours you should contact:

Ward 7b

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6768

Further information

Copies of the leaflet 'GHPI0321 Undergoing insertion of a tunnellled dialysis catheter' are available on Ward 7b at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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