

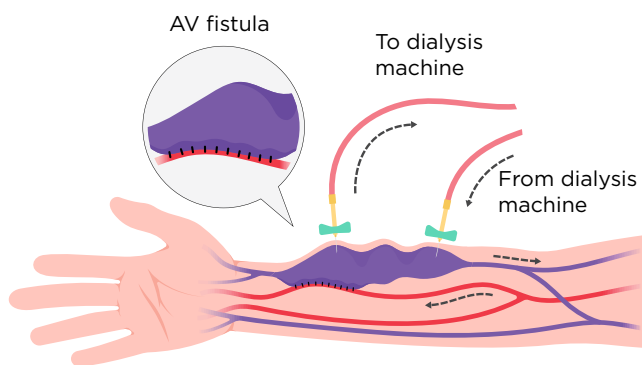
Types of Access for Dialysis

Dialysis is a treatment that cleans the blood and removes extra water and waste from the body when the kidneys no longer work. There are different types of dialysis access, which are used to connect the body to the dialysis machine. This guide will help you learn about the types of dialysis access and how they work.

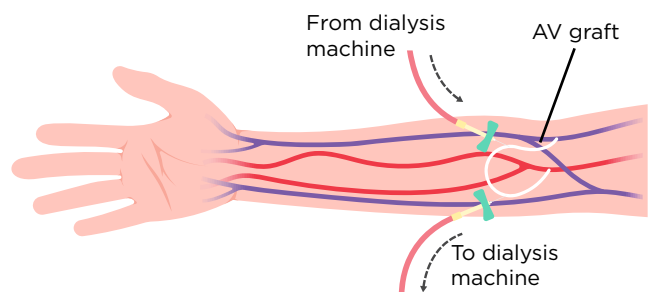


Hemodialysis Access

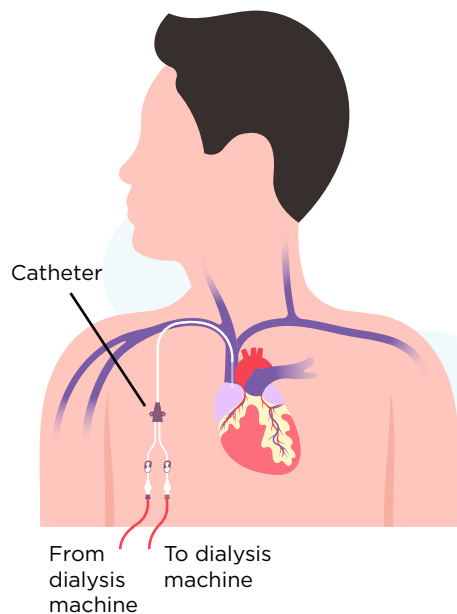
During hemodialysis (HD), blood is removed from the body and passed through a filter before being returned to the body. HD can be done at home by you or a caregiver, or in a dialysis center. If you choose to start HD, you or your care team will need a safe way to access the blood vessels in your arm. There are three types of HD access. Two are permanent, and one is temporary. The two permanent options for HD access are an arteriovenous (AV) fistula or an AV graft. Both allow you or your care team to place needles into your blood vessels. The needles are taken out at the end of the treatment session.



AV fistula: This is a direct connection between an artery and a vein, usually in the arm. The connection is made during surgery and needs time to heal before it can be used.



AV graft: This is a plastic tube that connects an artery to a vein. The tube is implanted during surgery.



HD catheter: The third type of HD access is a catheter. This is a long plastic tube that is inserted into a large vein in the neck or chest by a doctor. This is often used for people who need dialysis right away. The catheter is temporary and is usually taken out within 90 days, as it can cause infections or become blocked over time.

Which option is best?

Your doctor will choose whether an AV fistula or an AV graft is better for you. The choice often depends on the size and location of your blood vessels. An AV fistula is usually the better option because it lasts longer and has a lower risk of infections and other problems compared to an AV graft. Both options are good choices and are usually preferable to an HD catheter.

Caring for Your HD Access

It is important to take care of your access. After surgery, follow instructions from your doctor carefully. Learn to check your access every day. If you notice new bulges, skin breakdown, redness, scabs, or bleeding, tell your care team.

Before dialysis, wash your HD access with soap and water to help prevent infections. Your care team will check your access during each visit. This is a good time to ask them about any concerns you have.

If you have a HD catheter, your dialysis team will remove the dressing covering the catheter at each session. When at home, keep the dressing clean and dry. If the area where the catheter enters your skin gets red, itchy, or irritated, tell your care team. This could be a sign of an infection or allergy.





Peritoneal Dialysis Access

Peritoneal dialysis (PD) works by cycling a cleansing fluid in and out of the abdomen (belly) through a plastic PD catheter, which is placed surgically. PD is done at home, typically while sleeping. You can start treatments two to three weeks after the procedure. Unlike the temporary catheter used for HD, a PD catheter is safe to use for a long time.

Caring for Your PD Catheter

To lower the risk of infections and other problems with your PD catheter, follow these tips:

- Always follow directions from your doctor when doing PD treatments.
- Check the catheter site every day and tell your care team if you notice any changes in the site or the appearance of the cleansing fluid.
- Wear a mask when connecting your PD catheter. This will prevent you from breathing, coughing, or sneezing on the catheter, which can cause an infection.
- Avoid swimming in pools, hot tubs, or lakes with a PD catheter. Swimming in the ocean is usually safe, as the salt in the water lowers the risk of a waterborne infection.
- Avoiding constipation is very important when using a PD catheter. Excess stool causes pressure in the abdomen, which may prevent the PD catheter from working. Your nephrologist (kidney doctor) will recommend stool softeners or laxatives to make sure you do not become constipated.

Healthmap Solutions is here to help you manage your kidney health. To learn more, call Healthmap at **1-800-481-0474** or visit www.healthmapsolutions.com/patient-resources. Patients must meet program eligibility requirements to access Healthmap services.

