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Hemodialysis Access Discharge Instructions Ateriovenous Graft (AVG)

- ❑ **Arteriovenous Graft:** An internal (underneath the skin) surgical procedure in which an artery is connected to a vein using a man made graft (hollow tube) in the arm to create a pathway for blood to circulate. This pathway will mature to allow for long-term permanent hemodialysis access. The AVG will take 6 weeks to 3 months for maturing before the first hemodialysis access; therefore, most people will have a perm catheter to complete hemodialysis treatment. The AVG is accessed using 2 needles placed into the skin for removal of blood to the dialysis machine and the return of blood to the body.

Call your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

- ❑ You notice redness, swelling, pain or drainage around the surgical incision or along your arm
- ❑ You have an elevated temperature greater than 101.5
- ❑ Any bleeding or drainage from the graft
- ❑ You notice the skin is warm/hot to the touch
- ❑ You do not feel a thrill "buzz" underneath the skin
- ❑ You have numbness, cold fingers or tingling of the fingers in the extremity of the graft
- ❑ You have swelling or cyanosis (blue color) to fingers
- ❑ If any of these symptoms become worse during hemodialysis let your nurse and doctor know

Remember the following tips on proper care of your Arteriovenous Graft:

- ❑ Form a habit every **morning** and **night** to check your graft for a thrill "buzz" underneath the skin. You may want to obtain a stethoscope to listen to the bruit (sound like a swoosh or wind blowing). If you do **not** feel a thrill or hear a bruit **notify our office immediatley**. This means the graft may not be working. You may need a surgical procedure to declot your access.
- ❑ **No** blood pressures, needle sticks or IV's allowed in your graft arm.
- ❑ **No** tight clothing, jewelry or tourniquet around the graft arm
- ❑ Do **not** sleep on access arm
- ❑ **No** heaving lifting with your access arm (no weight greater than 10 lbs.)
- ❑ **Exercise** your AVG using silly putty or a small squeeze ball. Place object in your access hand using repetitive gripping motion while awake. This will decrease pain and help mature your access.
- ❑ Wash your access arm daily with soap and water. Pat dry
- ❑ Your hemodialysis nurse will **rotate** needle sites to use the entire graft. This allows the sites to heal before the next needle stick
- ❑ **No** digging or scratching around needle access sites.
- ❑ If bleeding occurs at needle site, **hold direct pressure** using sterile gauze. While holding pressure make sure you can still feel the thrill "buzz" in your access. If the bleeding does not stop after holding pressure for 30 minutes please call our office.
- ❑ You **may** shower, swim and take a bath with your graft. The staples must be out prior to baths and swimming. Staples will be removed in **7- 10 days**.

Call our office with any questions or concerns at 770-423-0595