



STAFF KEYS TO SUCCESS

Tips for patient and caregiver education on access care when outside of the dialysis clinic

STATEMENT OF USE: Preventing infections is a critical component of patient safety. This Keys to Success factsheet is intended to be used by staff in conjunction with the access care brochure for patients and caregivers. It will assist staff in having conversations with patients, educating them about how they can help prevent infections related to their access when outside of the dialysis facility, and promote the use of their own facility-specific instructions (FSI) on access care.

ALL ACCESS TYPES:

TEACHABLE **KEY** MOMENTS

- Ask patients if they know your FSI for access care at home. If no, review the instructions with them. If yes, ask them to verbalize your FSI to reinforce education.
- Encourage patients to report anything that feels odd, different, or painful either at home or while dialyzing. Educate patients on what to do if they think something is wrong with their access. Ask if they know when to call, who to call, or where to go.

FISTULAS AND GRAFTS:

TEACHABLE **KEY** MOMENTS

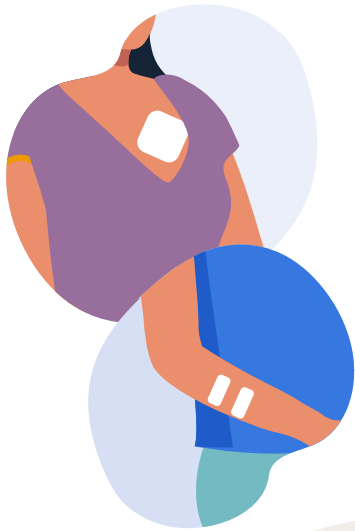
- Ask patients to show you how they check their fistula or graft at home. Take this opportunity to educate and explain the importance of “Look-Listen-Feel” to assess for redness, pain, heat and thrill.
- Ask patients if they understand why the dressing should be removed after their dialysis treatment. Have a conversation about your FSI dressing removal timing and take this opportunity to educate them about what they should do if their fistula or graft starts to bleed at home.
- Review your FSI about what to do if a patient has any graft or fistula concerns when away from the dialysis facility.

KEY REMINDERS FOR PATIENTS WITH FISTULAS OR GRAFTS

- Remind patients that washing their hands often is the best way to get rid of germs and prevent infection. Patients should also wash the skin over their fistula or graft with soap and water at least daily.
- Encourage patients to wear clothes that don't compress their fistula or graft.
- Tell patients not to allow anyone to take their blood pressure, draw blood, or give them a shot in the access limb.
- Remind patients to avoid sleeping on their fistula or graft and not to drape or place heavy items, such as bags of groceries, over the access limb.
- Encourage patients to look and feel their fistula or graft daily.

Start a **KEY** conversation:

Ask patients if they have any questions or concerns about their fistula or graft. Review your FSI on what to do when access concerns arise away from the dialysis facility.



CATHETERS:

TEACHABLE **KEY** MOMENTS



- Explain that it is important to keep the access area clean and dry. Take the time to review your facility specific guidelines on access care at home with the patient if their dressing were to become loose, dirty, or wet.
- Remind patients not to tamper with their access or allow others to use it for anything other than for dialysis.
- Ask patients if they know the signs and symptoms of an infection. Remind them of actions they need to take according to your FSI if they have fever, pain, redness, or swelling around their catheter.



KEY REMINDERS FOR PATIENTS WITH CATHETERS

- Remind patients that washing their hands often is the best way to get rid of germs and prevent infection.
- Tell patients never to use scissors or any other sharp objects (pins, for example) near the catheter limbs or to pull or tug on their access.
- Teach patients actions to take according to your FSI if they ever accidentally cut their catheter or if it becomes dislodged or falls out.
- Remind patients not to allow anyone except the dialysis care team to remove their dressing, unclamp the limb clamps, or use their dialysis catheter.



Start a **KEY** conversation:

Ask patients if they have additional questions about what they can do to keep their catheter infection free at home? Remind patients that catheters have a higher risk of infection and encourage them to ask their doctor about getting a fistula or graft instead.



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