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DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT A SPECIFIC TOPIC?
SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS TO:

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HELPFUL TIPS TO EMPOWER
DIALYSIS PATIENTS

Kidney Chronicles

Q&A: Keeping You Warm and Your Vascular Access Safe During Hemodialysis

Q. Why do I have to keep my access arm (the arm with my Arteriovenous Fistula (AVF) or graft) uncovered when I am feeling cold or want to sleep while having my hemodialysis treatment?

A. The reason is to keep you, as a patient, safe. To minimize the risk of needles becoming dislodged all hemodialysis patients are asked to keep their vascular access visible at ALL times during treatment. The blood line that delivers the blood to the dialyzer goes through a blood pump. The needles are attached to blood lines which allow

the blood to go into the dialyzer and to return the “clean” blood back to you. Your doctor prescribes the blood flow rate. It is usually between 300 and 500 mL/min (milliliters per minute). You can see the blood flow rate by looking at monitors on your machine.

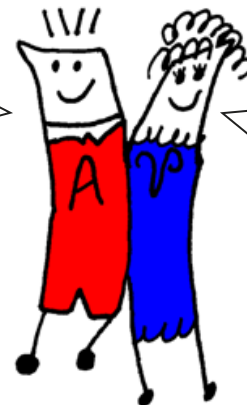
Ask your technician to show you. Blood and needle lines are secured with tape to your access arm to help keep the needle in place. Keeping your needles visible at all times will allow your nurse or patient care technician to quickly turn the pump off and clamp the blood line if a needle accidentally slips out.

Q. What can I do if I feel cold?

A. Wearing a glove can keep the hand warm during the dialysis treatment and draping the blanket across the shoulders of the access arm can help. Hand warmers (like those used when skiing) can also be helpful to hold. Dress in layers, and bring a hat and gloves if you need to. If you find you are still cold at dialysis after bundling up, talk to your doctor and health care team about other physical reasons that may be causing you to feel cold.

The Fortunes of Freddie & Freda Fistula

I wonder how many AVF relatives we have living in New England?



To date we have about 6,551 out of 11,141. I hope we continue to grow. Having a big, healthy family is GREAT!

To view editions of The Fortunes of Freddie & Freda Fistula (patient educational tool) comic strip, go to the Network of New England website at <http://www.networkofnewengland.org/ffirstpa.htm> to download a copy.