

4. A fistula means fewer hospitalizations:

Because a fistula is created with your own natural veins:

- A fistula needs fewer follow up procedures to keep it working, which means fewer hospital visits.
- A fistula clots less often, has the ability to self heal and causes less inflammation.
- A fistula lasts longer than other accesses.

5. A fistula may provide for a longer life:

Research has shown that patients who dialyze with a fistula have a lower risk of death and have fewer complications with their health.

Patients with a catheter or graft have a greater risk of death than patients with a fistula.

Be sure to talk with your doctor, dialysis staff or other patients about their experience.



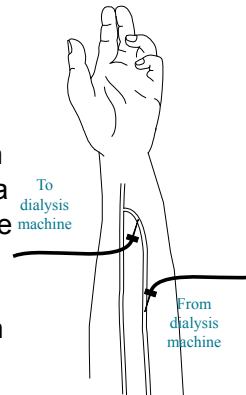
Prepared by the Upper Midwest Fistula First Coalition.
Please call 1-800-973-3773 for any questions or reprint requests.



A Staff Guide to Fistula First: What every patient needs to know about their vascular access choices

What is a Fistula?

A surgeon creates a fistula by connecting an artery directly to a vein, usually in the forearm. This connection enlarges the vein so that it can be used for dialysis.



1. A fistula is your best option:

A dialysis access is your lifeline, and a fistula is the type of access least likely to develop any complications.

Research shows by having a fistula, your health and well-being will be significantly improved.

Did you know that with a fistula your lifestyle will be much more flexible? Unlike catheters, you can shower, bathe, and swim with a fistula!

2. A fistula will lower your risk of infection:

With a fistula, your veins and arteries are natural thus less prone to infection than grafts and catheters. Catheters have an infection risk 22 times higher than a fistula. Grafts have an infection risk 8 times greater than a fistula.

An external device such as a catheter creates a direct pathway to your bloodstream which greatly increases your risk of a very serious infection. Infection is the 2nd leading cause of death among dialysis patients.

3. A fistula can improve your quality of life:

A fistula allows a patient more freedom by decreasing hospitalizations related to infection, clotting, and access failure.

Most patients report feeling better and able to do more because of better dialysis and fewer activity restrictions.

The more a fistula is used, the stronger it becomes, and needle insertion discomfort decreases.

Fistulas frequently last many years (some decades with proper care). At 3 years 70% of all AV grafts fail. At 3 years 75% of all AV fistulas are still open and working.