

Information for patients and carers

Prevention of Life-threatening Bleeds From Arteriovenous Fistula or Arteriovenous Grafts



What are the risk factors for a life-threatening bleed from my AV fistula or graft?

Be aware of the following warning signs of an increased risk of life-threatening bleed from the fistula/graft:

- Any non-healing scab/wound over the fistula/graft
- Prolonged bleeding post haemodialysis or bleeding in between dialysis sessions
- Aneurysms that are increasing in size, either at cannulation sites or elsewhere
- Shiny, thin skin over the fistula/graft, particularly over aneurysms
- Signs of infection – redness, swelling, pain, discharge or pus
- Other skin integrity issues in the vicinity of the fistula/graft

What should I do if I notice these changes?

If you notice these changes, you should inform the renal team at the earliest opportunity. You can also contact the renal vascular access team on the contact details provided in this leaflet.

In the event of bleeding after leaving hospital:

- Patients must dial **999** immediately for any bleeding which soaks through a dressing despite direct pressure. Tell the emergency services you have uncontrolled bleeding from your dialysis fistula or graft
- The priority in this situation is to get help and this should not be delayed whilst trying to stop the bleeding as loss of consciousness can occur quickly
- The priority is to stop the bleeding, not preserve the fistula or graft function
- Until help from the emergency services arrives, patients or carers should continue to apply direct pressure to the bleeding site.

- Put a lid on it! If easily available, a hollow side down bottle top can be used to apply pressure over the bleeding site. This ensures pressure is localised to the area of the bleed. Secure with a bandage and maintain pressure throughout
- Do NOT use a large absorbent item such as a towel to wrap around the area, as this disperses the pressure reducing the effectiveness
- We do not recommend the use of a tourniquet
- NEVER HOLD UNDER A RUNNING TAP AS THIS WILL ENCOURAGE BLEEDING

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact

between the hours of 8am-4pm Monday to Friday

Renal Vascular Access Team **01772 523528** or **01772 523219**.

Out of Hours

Ward 25 **01772 522539** or Preston Dialysis unit **01772 522755**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

www.ukkidney.org

www.kidneycareuk.org

[Kidney Care UK controlling bleeds from a fistula or a graft](#)

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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