

Vascular Access Assessment

Inspect
(Look!)



Palpate
(Feel!)



Auscultate
(Listen!)



Normal or Abnormal?

	NORMAL	ABNORMAL Notify MD and VA RN
Hand/Foot Colour	Normal	Dusky or blue Red
Skin Integrity	Normal (but can be post-surgical red flare on skin)	Small pustular lesions Erythema, tight, shiny and tender skin, drainage from access site, skin warm or hot to touch, and pain
Edema	No edema; if edema present, goes away when limb elevated	Edema of limb Edema in chest, neck, arm, and/or face Subcutaneous collateral veins observable in the neck, upper chest, and shoulder
Thrill (Palpation)	Thrill strongest at the arterial anastomosis; decreases as move upstream Pulse soft and easily compressible Pulse felt over entire graft (AVGs)	No palpable thrill Additional thrill palpable along the course of the access Pulse palpable at stenotic site (if AVF, may have water-hammer feel) and disappears abruptly; proximal pulse weak Pulse not easily compressible
Hand/Foot Temperature	Warm	Cool or cold Hot
Capillary Refill	Same when compared to other hand; consider room temperature when assessing	Delayed
Pain	Not present	Mild to severe
Bruit (Auscultation)	Prominent at the arterial anastomosis; as move upstream Low pitched, continuous, and audible on diastole and systole	High pitched, discontinuous, and/or audible on systole only No bruit