



## Bleeding Fistula or Graft: Emergency Measures

*It is very rare for your fistula or graft to bleed after you leave the dialysis unit. For some people the chances are a little higher and the bleeding may be more serious. If your health care team has identified that you may be one of those people, this brochure tells you what to do. If you still have questions after reading this, talk to your doctor or other member of your health care team.*

### **What might make a person more likely to bleed excessively from their fistula or graft?**

You are at higher likelihood to bleed excessively from your fistula or graft if:

1. An area on your fistula or graft:
  - is not healing
  - is infected
  - is bulging and is noticeably increasing in size
  - feels more pulsatile or firmer
  - has a very thin and shiny skin.
2. Your venous pressures are high.
3. Your INR (bleeding time ratio) is higher than 2.

If you have any of these, please let your dialysis nurse know.

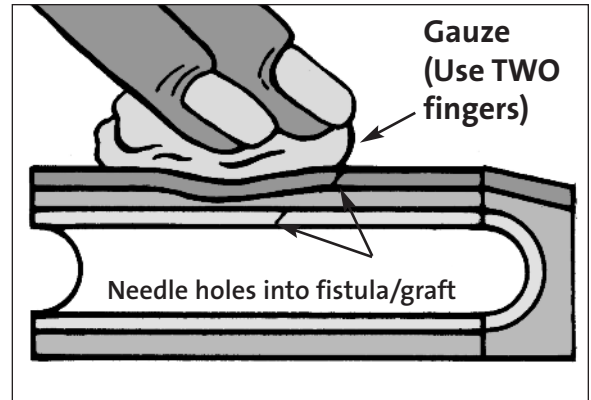
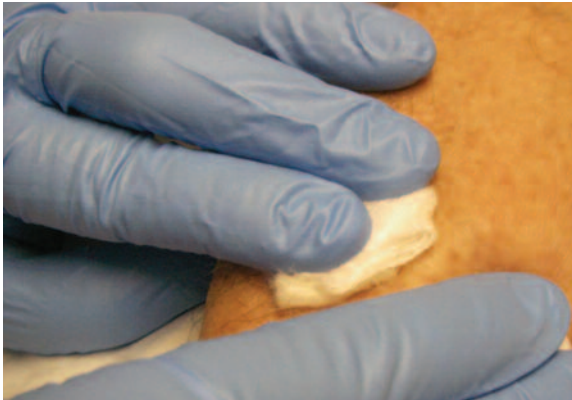
### **If I am at risk for excessively bleeding from my fistula or graft, what supplies should I keep on hand?**

Supplies that you should keep on hand in your emergency kit include:

- 16 gauze pads, 4" x 4"
- 2 gauze pads, 2" x 2"
- 1 adhesive dressing or tape
- 4 pairs of gloves (unsterile)
- blood pressure cuff

### **What should I do if there is excessive bleeding from my fistula or graft after I leave the dialysis unit?**

1. Call for help from anyone who is at home with you.
2. Call 911 or have the person with you call 911. You will need emergency attention even if the bleeding stops.
3. Using gauze from your emergency kit, put pressure on the spot that is bleeding with the tips of your fingers and press very firmly into your arm at that spot. If you do not have gauze handy, use an absorbent cloth, tissue or paper towel.



4. If this does not stop the bleeding, keep holding pressure over the hole and at the same time press hard on the arterial end of your fistula or graft (if available, have a companion help you). If you have been identified at risk for bleeding and do not know where the arterial end of your fistula or graft is, please ask your nurse to show you where to hold.
5. If you are still not able to control the bleeding, place the blood pressure cuff from your emergency kit around your upper arm and inflate the cuff until the needle is at 200. Keep the needle at 200 by squeezing the bulb every few minutes. If you have someone with you, ask them to help.
6. Get to the emergency department *immediately*.

### Important Phone Numbers

Kidney Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Vascular Surgeon \_\_\_\_\_

Dialysis Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Kidney Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

Vascular Access Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

This brochure is based on a similar pamphlet developed by Vancouver Island Health Authority, with appreciation.

The information in this pamphlet is provided for educational and information purposes, and to support discussion with your health care team about your medical condition and treatment. It does not constitute medical advice and should not substitute advice given by your physician or other qualified health care professional.

This brochure can be downloaded from the BC Renal Agency website: [www.bcrenalagency.ca](http://www.bcrenalagency.ca)

