



# Help Save Veins in People with Chronic Kidney Disease

## A Provincial Initiative of the BC Provincial Renal Agency

### Why Save Veins?

- People with chronic kidney disease (CKD) may be on hemodialysis (HD) or may need HD in the future. The best way for administering HD is through a fistula.
- Fistula creation requires a healthy peripheral vein (preferably in the arm). The ability of a fistula to function depends on a healthy venous circuit back to the heart.
- Venipuncture, peripheral IV lines, peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs) and central venous catheters (CVCs) inserted into the subclavian vein can damage peripheral and/or central veins and jeopardize future fistula creation and/or function.

### Who are the Patients?

- People with chronic kidney disease: eGFR < 30 mL/min.

### Key Actions to Save Veins

- Use hand veins first for venipuncture or peripheral IV lines. Avoid the arm with a fistula or graft.
- Use jugular veins for CVCs. Avoid subclavian veins or PICC lines.

### Help Educate Patients and Other Care Providers

- Provide “vein preservation” wallet cards to patients (available from VA nurses; use web link below to access list of contacts by health authority).
- Make notation on lab requisitions “RENAL PATIENT: Try to use hand veins for venipuncture.”
- For inpatients, place a “save the veins” poster above the bed on admission.
- Suggest patients wear a medical alert bracelet that says “RENAL PATIENT: Try to use hand veins for venipuncture.”

See [www.bcrenalagency.ca/professionals/VascularAccess/ProvGuide.htm](http://www.bcrenalagency.ca/professionals/VascularAccess/ProvGuide.htm) for the guideline and patient and staff educational materials.

