

# SHOWERING WITH A HEMODIALYSIS CATHETER

**Take care of your bandage. Keep your bandage clean and dry.**

A **tub bath** is the **best way** to keep your bandage clean and dry while you wash.

If you chose to shower rather than bath, this brochure provides tips to help you keep your bandage clean and dry. If you still have questions after reading this, talk to your doctor or other member of the health care team.

This shower procedure applies only **IF**:

- Your catheter has been in place for at least 6 months; and
- Your exit site is well-healed; and
- You have not had any infections from your current catheter.

**If any of these things are not true, a tub bath is strongly advised.**

## Tips for showering with a hemodialysis catheter:

1. The best time to shower is right before coming to HD.
2. Try and have someone assist you.
3. Before getting into the shower:
  - a. Make sure catheter caps are secure.
  - b. If your catheter and exit site are not already covered, cover with a waterproof dressing (Tegaderm is a good choice).
  - c. Place saran wrap over the dressing and over your shoulder. Using waterproof tape, tape the saran wrap securely to your skin.
    - Instead of saran wrap, you can use a showering cape that covers your shoulders and chest; see [www.korshield.com](http://www.korshield.com) for an example. Order on-line or phone 1-888-4695.

4. When in the shower:
  - a. Use a hand-held shower, if possible.
  - b. Don't face the shower. Keep the direct spray away from the area of your catheter.
5. Once out of the shower:
  - a. Gently pat dry the saran wrap/showering cape with a clean towel. Remove the saran wrap/showering cape.
  - b. Dry the rest of your body.
6. If the dressing peels off or accidentally gets wet, wash your hands well and remove what is left of the bandage. Put on a clean, dry 4x4 and tape the gauze in place. Go to your dialysis unit to have a proper dressing applied.
7. Be aware of signs of infection. Contact the hemodialysis unit if:
  - There is any redness, warmth or pain along the catheter.
  - There is any oozing or drainage from your catheter exit site.
  - You have noticeable swelling or itching around your catheter or neck.
  - You are feverish, and have any of the above symptoms.
  - You notice the part of your catheter outside your skin seems to be getting longer.

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

The information in this pamphlet is provided for educational/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 for advice given by your physician or other qualified health care professional.