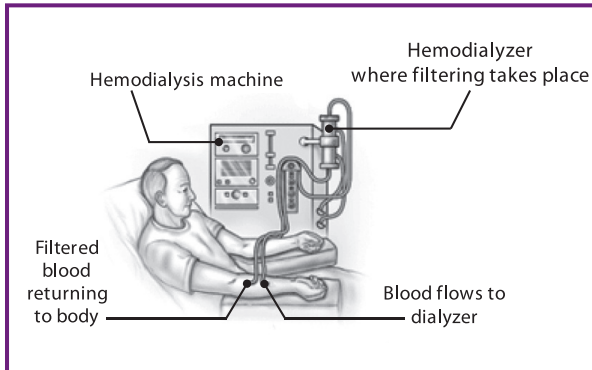


# YOU AND YOUR HEMODIALYSIS ACCESS

**During hemodialysis, blood must continuously be removed, cleaned and then returned to your body. In order for this to happen, you will need a vascular access.**



The best type of vascular access is a fistula.

A surgeon joins a vein to an artery, which causes the vein to become bigger and stronger. This new vein is called a fistula.



**Fistula**

A fistula is the best choice because:

- It performs the best.
- It lasts the longest.
- It has fewer complications (infections).
- It is safe to shower and swim.
- It requires fewer hospitalizations.

There are some patients for which creating a fistula may not be possible. Your doctor might suggest another option called a graft. A graft is like a fistula but it uses a short piece of soft, plastic-like tubing to join the vein to an artery.

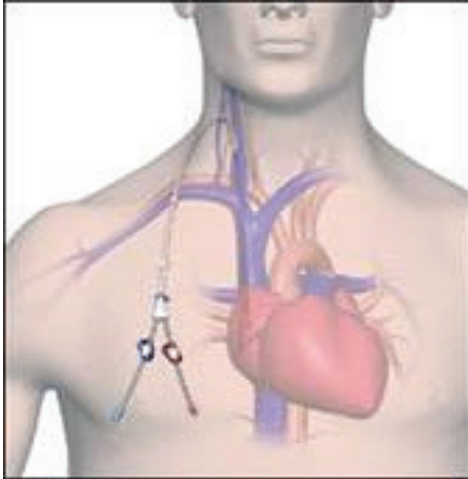
## Fistula First!

- Talk to your doctor about all of your options.
- The sooner you learn about your options, the more choices you may have available to you.

**A fistula is the gold standard, meaning that it is the best choice.**

# YOU AND YOUR HEMODIALYSIS ACCESS

## Catheters



Catheters are not a good choice for long-term treatment because they can damage veins and are not considered reliable (they block frequently).

Compared to patients with fistulas, patients with catheters have:

- A greater risk of death.
- A greater risk of serious infection.
- An increased risk of having to go to the hospital for care.
- A greater chance that the dialysis machine will not remove all the waste products and fluids from their blood.
- A greater chance of having more procedures done to keep the catheter working.



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.

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



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