



Fistulas provide better dialysis.
Fistulas have fewer complications.
Fistulas have fewer infections. Fistulas are linked to fewer hospitalizations.
Fistulas last longer.



The Renal Network, Inc.
911 E. 86th Street, Suite 202
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Telephone: 317-257-8265
Patient Line: 800-456-6919

www.TheRenalNetwork.org
www.KidneyPatientNews.org

Produced by The Patient Leadership Committee
And published under CMS contracts
HHSM-500-2006-NW 009C &
HHSM-500-2006-NW 010C

**EASE
THE
OUCH!**

**Taking the fear
out of AV Fistula
Placement**

**A Discussion Guide
for Patients,
Family Members
and Healthcare Staff**

Let Us Help

We understand that your dialysis healthcare team has told you that an AV fistula is your best access choice.

We also are aware that you have concerns about your access:

- Needles and Sticks
- Looks and Appearance
- Complications

These concerns may cause you immense stress and anxiety.

We know that fear of needles is a big problem.

Many people avoid getting proper medical care because of this fear.

Yet your access is your lifeline — your choice of access is important to your well-being.

Don't let your vascular access choice be influenced by fear or lack of information.

Let your unit healthcare staff help - discuss your concerns.



Manage The Fear

Be specific about your fears. Identify and name them.

For example, what about needles scare you: the size, that they will hurt?

The first few times a needle is inserted into a new fistula are likely to be the most difficult. To ease the ouch and make this experience more comfortable, your healthcare team **MAY**:

- Use most experienced staff for the first few sticks
- Use smaller needles at first
- Use only one needle for the first treatment

YOU can help manage your fear:

- By choosing “Not to Look” during the stick
- By distracting yourself with pleasant thoughts
- By using available medications
- By taking control and learning to place your own needles

If you find that your fears are too overwhelming or causing physical reactions (like fainting) talk to your social worker.



Put Things In Perspective

Your choice of access is critical to your care. Be sure to make the best informed choice that you can.

Reach out to your healthcare staff today! Here are some questions to help you start:

- Am I a candidate for an AV fistula?
- Why should I have an AV fistula placed?
- How will it improve my dialysis and the way I feel?
- How can I be sure that this is the best choice for me?
- How will you find the best vein for the AV fistula?
- How will we find and select a surgeon?
- What can I do to make sure that my access is being stuck properly?
- What will my AV fistula look like?
- What problems will I have with an AV fistula?
- What do I have to do to keep my fistula healthy?