Check your fistula every day.

If you do not know how, ask your Dialysis Care Team to teach you how to monitor your fistula.

**Look**

**Feel**

Did you notice anything different when you checked your fistula today?

No change.

Yes, a change.

**Great! Keep checking each day. At your next treatment, tell your Dialysis Care Team that there was no change.**

**Call the contact given to you by your Dialysis Care Team. Share what you found. They will tell you what to do next.**

Continued..
The dressing is clean and dry.

The skin around the dressing looks like it did before you had surgery. The hand looks the same as it did before surgery.

When the dressing is no longer needed, the surgery site is clean and dry.

Once it has healed, the skin over the fistula is all one color and looks like the skin around it.

The dressing is wet or soiled. There is drainage on the dressing.

The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.

There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

When a dressing is no longer needed, place your hand over the fistula. You can feel the fistula under the skin.

You cannot feel the fistula. The hand of the affected arm feels numb and/or cold to the touch.

Ask a member of your Dialysis Care Team to complete the form below.
Did any of the results of your daily fistula check fall under the “STOP” column? If so, call the contact listed below and share your results to find out what to do next.

Contact: ____________________________
During regular facility hours: ____________________________
After hours: ____________________________

www.esrdncc.org

This publication was developed under Contract Number HHSM-500-2013-NW002C, titled “End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center (ESRD NCC),” sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.
Check your fistula every day.

If you do not know how, ask your Dialysis Care Team to teach you how to monitor your fistula.

Look  

Listen  

Feel

Did you notice anything different when you checked your fistula today?

No change.

Yes, a change.

Great! Keep checking each day. At your next treatment, tell your Dialysis Care Team that there was no change.

Call the contact given to you by your Dialysis Care Team. Share what you found. They will tell you what to do next.
When you place your fistula next to your ear, you hear the sound of the blood going through it.

As the fistula grows larger, the sound becomes louder.

You feel the fistula under the skin. At first, the fistula seems small, but it should grow over time.

The surgery site is clean and dry. The skin over the fistula is all one color and looks like the skin around it.

The hand looks the same as it did before surgery.

There is redness, swelling or drainage.

The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.

You hear no sound or decreased sound.

You cannot feel the fistula. The hand of the affected arm feels numb or cold to the touch.
### Feel

**Thrill:** A vibration or buzz that can be felt best over the scar. This is where the artery and vein are joined together. The thrill becomes stronger over time as the fistula grows.

- You feel the thrill along the rest of the fistula, but it doesn’t feel as strong as it does over the scar.
- You cannot feel the thrill or it is weaker over the scar than it was the last time you checked it.

**Pulse:** A slight beating that feels like a heartbeat. When you place your fingers lightly on the fistula, they move slightly.

- Pulse is a slight beating that feels like a heartbeat. When you place your fingers lightly on the fistula, they move slightly.
- The beat is stronger than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the fistula rise and fall with each beat.

---

**Week 3: New Fistula Daily Check**

**“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom**

Ask a member of your Dialysis Care Team to complete the form below. Did any of the results of your daily fistula check fall under the “STOP” column? If so, call the contact listed below and share your results to find out what to do next.

**Contact:**

- During regular facility hours: __________________________________________________________________________
- After hours: ________________________________________________________________________________

www.esrdncc.org

This publication was developed under Contract Number HHSM-500-2013-NW002C, titled “End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center (ESRD NCC),” sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.

arteriovenous
FISTULA FIRST
AVF — The first choice for hemodialysis
Check your fistula every day.

If you do not know how, ask your Dialysis Care Team to teach you how to monitor your fistula.

Look

Listen

Feel

Did you notice anything different when you checked your fistula today?

No change.

Yes, a change.

Great! Keep checking each day. At your next treatment, tell your Dialysis Care Team that there was no change.

Call the contact given to you by your Dialysis Care Team. Share what you found. They will tell you what to do next.
### Patient

**“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom**  
**Weeks 4-5: New Fistula Daily Check**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GO</strong></th>
<th><strong>STOP</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Look</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listen</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The hand **looks the same** as it did before surgery.  
The skin over the fistula is **all one color** and looks like the skin around it. | **The arm is** bruised and/or **the hand is not the normal color.**  
**There is redness, swelling or drainage.** | **You hear no sound or decreased sound.**  
**You feel the fistula under the skin.** At first, the fistula seems small but it should grow over time. | **You cannot feel the fistula.** The hand of the affected arm feels numb or cold to the touch. |
| **When you place your fistula next to your ear, you hear the sound of the blood going through it.**  
As the fistula grows larger, the sound becomes louder. | **Continued..** |
Ask a member of your Dialysis Care Team to complete the form below. Did any of the results of your daily fistula check fall under the “STOP” column? If so, call the contact listed below and share your results to find out what to do next.

Contact: ________________________________
During regular facility hours: ________________________________
After hours: ________________________________

www.esrdncc.org

This publication was developed under Contract Number HHSM-500-2013-NW002C, titled “End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center (ESRD NCC),” sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.
Check your fistula every day.

If you do not know how, ask your Dialysis Care Team to teach you how to monitor your fistula.

**Look**

**Listen**

**Feel**

Did you notice anything different when you checked your fistula today?

No change.  

Yes, a change.

Great! Keep checking each day. At your next treatment, tell your Dialysis Care Team that there was no change.

Call the contact given to you by your Dialysis Care Team. Share what you found. They will tell you what to do next.
Look

The skin over your fistula is all one color and looks like the skin around it.

Stop

There is redness, swelling or drainage.

Listen

When you place your fistula next to your ear, you hear a sound. The sound is the same as the last time you checked it.

You hear no sound, or the sound you hear is different than the last time you checked it.

Feel

Thrill: A vibration or buzz that can be felt best over the scar. This is where the artery and vein are joined together.

You can feel the thrill best over the scar. You feel it along the rest of the fistula, but it won’t feel as strong.

You cannot feel the thrill or it is weaker over the area where the artery is joined to the vein. It is not as strong as it was the last time you checked it.

Continued..
Pulse is a slight beating like a heartbeat. When you place your fingers lightly on the fistula, they move slightly. 

Feel

The beat is stronger than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the fistula rise and fall with each beat.

Ask a member of your Dialysis Care Team to complete the form below.

Did any of the results of your daily fistula check fall under the “STOP” column?

If so, call the contact listed below and share your results to find out what to do next.

Contact: ____________________________

During regular facility hours: ____________________________

After hours: ____________________________

www.esrdncc.org

This publication was developed under Contract Number HHSM-500-2013-NW002C, titled “End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center (ESRD NCC),” sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.