Week 1: Graft Healing & Readiness Check

Dialysis Professional

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

Week 1: Graft Healing & Readiness Check

- Perform graft healing check at each treatment or when patient reports a change.
  - Reinforce to patient the importance of daily graft checks.
  - Listen to the patient.

Were there any abnormal findings during the graft healing and readiness check?

**No**

Document that there were no abnormal findings.

**Yes**

Document findings and refer to expert clinician.

Continued...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Look</strong></th>
<th><strong>Listen</strong></th>
<th><strong>Feel</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dressing is clean and dry.</td>
<td>The dressing is wet or soiled. There is drainage on the dressing.</td>
<td>You can feel the graft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The skin around the dressing looks like it did before surgery.</td>
<td>The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.</td>
<td>You cannot feel the graft and/or the hand of the affected arm is cold to the touch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hand looks the same as it did before surgery.</td>
<td>There is redness, swelling, or drainage.</td>
<td>Thrill is a vibration or buzz that can be felt most prominently where the graft joins the artery and where it joins the vein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the dressing is no longer needed, the surgery site is clean and dry.</td>
<td>When you listen with a stethoscope, You hear the bruit along the length of the graft.</td>
<td>You can feel the thrill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once healed, the skin over the graft is all one color and looks like the skin around it.</td>
<td>The bruit sounds like a “whoosh,” or for some, like a drum beat.</td>
<td>You cannot feel the thrill or it is weaker than the last time it was checked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Continued..**
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Week 1: Graft Healing & Readiness Check

**GO**

**Feel**

**Pulse:** A slight beating that feels like a heartbeat. Fingers placed lightly on the graft move slightly.

**Pulsatile:** The beat is **stronger** than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the graft rise and fall with each beat.

**STOP**
Weeks 2-3: Graft Healing & Readiness Check

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

- Perform graft healing check at each treatment or when patient reports a change.
- Reinforce to patient the importance of daily graft checks.
- Listen to the patient.

**Look**

**Listen**

**Feel**

Augmentation Test

Were there any abnormal findings during the graft healing and readiness check?

- **No**
  - Document that there were no abnormal findings.

- **Yes**
  - Document findings and refer to expert clinician.
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**Weeks 2-3: Graft Healing & Readiness Check**

**Look**

You can see the graft and tell if it is a straight or looped graft.

The cannulation segment is long enough to use two needles placed at least two inches apart.

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

You cannot see the graft.

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

There is redness, swelling or drainage.

**Listen**

When you listen to the graft with a stethoscope, You hear the bruit along the length of the graft.

The bruit sounds like a “whoosh,” or for some, like a drum beat.

There is no sound, or the bruit is not as loud as the last time it was checked.

Sound is different than what a normal bruit should sound like.

**Feel**

You can feel the graft.

You cannot feel the graft.

Thrill is a vibration or buzz that can be felt most prominently where the graft joins the artery and where it joins the vein.

You cannot feel the thrill or it is weaker than the last time it was checked.

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

**Pulsatile:** The beat is stronger than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the graft rise and fall with each beat.

Continued..
**Augmentation Test**

If normal at week 2 or 3, it does not need to be repeated.

**Curved Graft**
The arrows show you where to place your fingers. Place your fingers at point A on the graft, feel the pulse, and press down until no blood is flowing through the graft. Keep your finger on the graft, place your other finger at point B to feel the pulse near the connection of the graft to the artery.

**Straight Graft**
Place your fingers on the out-going venous part of the graft, feel the pulse, and press down until no blood is flowing through the graft. Keep your finger on the venous part of the graft and feel for the pulse near the arterial connection to the graft.

Pulse is “strong and bounding” and may cause your finger to rise and fall with each beat. Pulse does not become more forceful or “strong and bounding.”
“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom

Week 4: Graft Healing & Readiness Check

- Perform graft healing check at each treatment or when patient reports a change.
- Reinforce to patient the importance of daily graft checks.
- Listen to the patient.

Were there any abnormal findings during the graft healing and readiness check?

No

Document that there were no abnormal findings.

Yes

Document findings and refer to expert clinician.
**Look**

- The hand of the affected arm looks the same as it did before surgery.
- The skin over the graft is all one color and looks like the skin around it.

**Listen**

- When you listen to the graft with a stethoscope, you hear the bruit along the length of the graft.
- The bruit sounds like a “whoosh,” or for some, like a drum beat.

**Feel**

- Thrill is a vibration or buzz that can be felt most prominently where the graft joins the artery and where it joins the vein.

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**Week 4: Graft Healing & Readiness Check**

**GO**

- The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.
- There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

**STOP**

- There is no sound, or the bruit is not as loud as the last time it was checked.
- Sound is different than what a normal bruit should sound like.

**Look**

- The arm is bruised and/or the hand is not the normal color.
- There is redness, swelling, or drainage.

**Listen**

- There is no sound, or the bruit is not as loud as the last time it was checked.
- Sound is different than what a normal bruit should sound like.

**Feel**

- You can feel the thrill.
- You cannot feel the thrill or it is weaker than the last time it was checked.

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

**Pulsatile:** The beat is stronger than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the graft rise and fall with each beat.
**Augmentation Test**

**Optional**

**Curved Graft**
The arrows show you where to place your fingers. Place your fingers at point A on the graft, feel the pulse, and press down until no blood is flowing through the graft. Keep your finger on the graft, place your other finger at point B to feel the pulse near the connection of the graft to the artery.

**Straight Graft**
Place your fingers on the out-going venous part of the graft, feel the pulse, and press down until no blood is flowing through the graft. Keep your finger on the venous part of the graft and feel for the pulse near the arterial connection to the graft.

Pulse is **“strong and bounding”** and may cause your finger to **rise and fall** with each beat.  

Pulse **does not** become more forceful or **“strong and bounding.”**