

Transcript

If you have kidney failure, you may need hemodialysis, or a machine to clean your blood on a regular basis.

During hemodialysis treatment 2 needles are used, one to take blood out of your body and send it to the artificial kidney machine to be cleaned, and another to return the clean blood to your body.

Because you will have treatment sessions often, the area of your body where the needles go in needs to be strong. To strengthen the access area, your healthcare provider may recommend you get an arteriovenous graft, commonly called an AV graft or graft.

A graft is a very thin, flexible tube made of soft plastic. You won't see the graft on the outside of your body, but under your skin the graft connects one of your arteries to one of your veins. Blood flows through the graft. It is stronger than a normal vein so it can be used for hemodialysis treatment as often as you need it. A well cared for graft can last for several years.

To insert the graft, a trained member of your healthcare team may use an x-ray or ultrasound machine to connect the graft to the artery and vein, usually in your arm, but sometimes in your leg or chest.

When your graft is first inserted, you may feel some discomfort. Your healthcare provider may recommend you take pain medications for a short time to relieve any discomfort.

You should be able to use your graft for hemodialysis about 2 to 3 weeks after it is inserted.

When you need hemodialysis, access to your bloodstream is your lifeline. Follow all of your healthcare provider's instructions when caring for your graft to keep it working well and to avoid any complications.