

All you need to know about your dialysis loop

(arteriovenous graft)

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Caring for your loop limb

You can take care of your loop by following these steps:

Do:

- Be careful not to knock your loop limb for the first few days after your loop has been formed.
- Rest your loop limb - your wound needs time to heal.
- Be careful not to lie on your loop limb.
- Elevate your loop limb while sitting down as this can help to minimise swelling.
- If you have a thigh loop, watch for changes in colour, warmth and feeling in your toes.

Don't:

- Lift anything heavy with your loop limb for the first two weeks.
- Let anyone take blood or your blood pressure from the loop arm.
- Wear any tight sleeves or watches that may restrict the flow of blood through your loop arm.

Checking your loop

Every day check your loop for a 'bruit'. This tells you that your loop is working.

'Bruit' (pronounced brew-ee)

Listen for a sound called a 'bruit' along your loop. A 'bruit' is a whooshing sound. You may need to use a stethoscope to hear the 'bruit'. The Dialysis Access Nurse can teach you how to listen for a 'bruit'.

Contact the Dialysis Access Nurse or your dialysis nurse if any of these things occur.

What should I do if I have a problem?

Please contact us if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- your loop becomes red, swollen or painful
- the appearance of your loop changes (for example a lump appears over your wound)
- you experience a tingling sensation in your hand/foot and/or fingers/toes.
- you can no longer hear the 'bruit'.

Contact details

Business Hours

(Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm)

Canberra Hospital Dialysis Access Nurse

Phone 02 5124 4564

Your local dialysis unit on _____

After hours

Go to your local Emergency Department if you can't feel the 'bruit' or think you might have an infection.

Show your alert card when attending the Emergency Department

The alert cards tell clinicians that you are a renal patient and have a dialysis access. If you don't have an alert card, please ask your nurse.

Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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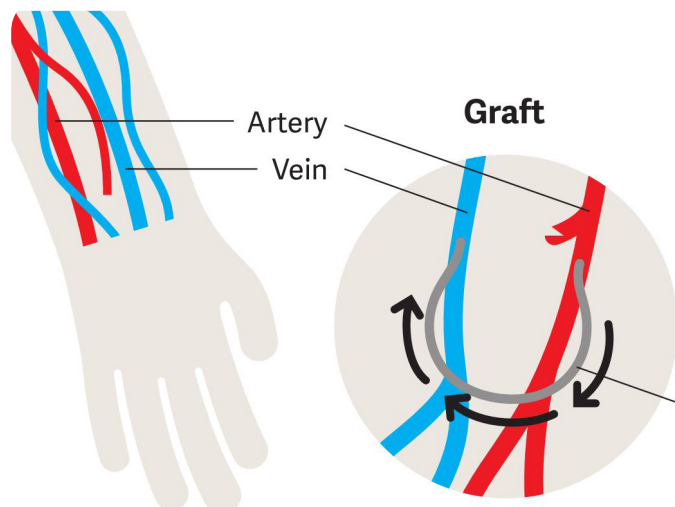
**Canberra Health
Services**

What is a dialysis loop?

A dialysis loop is a strong artificial tube inserted by a vascular surgeon underneath the skin of your forearm, upper arm or thigh. It is used as an access point for your dialysis.

One end of the tube connects to one of your arteries, and the other end connects to one of your veins (in the same limb). The graft may be straight or in the shape of a horseshoe.

The surgeon will decide whether to use your arm or thigh for the loop. The decision depends on many factors including the size and condition of your veins and arteries.



Why do I need a loop?

A loop is placed in you for long term dialysis access. It is usually used when your veins are not suitable for an Arterio-venous fistula (AVF) or fistula. The loop can usually be used for dialysis two to four weeks after your surgery.

What are the risks?

There are some risks to having a loop:

- **Infection** - A wound infection may develop. This may be treated with antibiotics.
- The loop may become blocked and stop working. You may need further surgery if this happens.
- **Swelling in your loop arm or leg following surgery** - It is important to move your arm or leg after your surgery. Gentle frequent movements are recommended. This movement may help the swelling to go down and will stop your arm or leg from becoming stiff.
- **Loss of feeling or pain in your hand, fingers or feet** - This can happen because of reduced blood flow to your hand/foot. If you have loss of feeling or pain please tell your dialysis nurse.

After your operation

You will need to stay in hospital overnight. We recommend arranging for someone to take you home the next day as you will not be able to drive.

You may notice a small amount of blood on your dressing and/or some bruising around the wound site.

You may experience pain in your loop limb and it may be swollen and a little red. Your nurse will give you pain relief if needed.

You should have feeling, warmth and movement in your fingers and toes, and your hand or foot should not be cold. If you notice any changes, tell your nurse.

The stitches on your wound may be dissolvable or non-dissolvable, and we will let you know about this before you leave hospital. If they are non-dissolvable you can have them removed at your GP surgery 10 to 14 days after your operation. If they are dissolvable, you don't need to do anything.

Before you leave hospital

Your dressing will be changed before you leave hospital and will stay in place for 10 to 14 days. After that, the dressing can be removed by your GP, dialysis nurse or the dialysis access nurse.

The Dialysis Access Nurse should see you before you go home. You will also be contacted for an appointment (access review) approximately 2 to 4 weeks after surgery. If you live in Southern NSW, please arrange a follow up with the renal outreach nurse, renal clinic or your GP.