

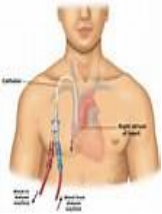
AUGUST



Cherish your Vascular Access ***Your Vascular Access is your Lifeline.*** ***Learn how to care for it and watch for problems.***

How can I increase my engagement this month?

- **If you have a catheter....**



- A catheter is not usually a permanent access. It is a temporary access until a graft or fistula is placed and is ready to use.
- Learn how to take care of your catheter at home. Do not get it wet. Catheters are placed in a vein which leads to the heart. Getting your catheter wet could cause an infection which could result in death.
- Ask your Care Team what you should do if you have any problems with your catheter. To learn more, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/dialysis/PDFs/Dialysis-Patient-PocketGuide.pdf>.

- **Do you have a fistula? If not, speak up!**



- With fistulas, your access can last a lifetime. The benefits of a fistula are last many years, less infection, high blood flow, and fewer problems. By taking care of your fistula it can improve your health and may extend your life! You may be more likely to get a transplant if you have a fistula because you will get fewer infections than people with catheters
- Ask your Care Team why you do not have a fistula. Work with them to make a plan to get a fistula.
- If you are going to get a fistula, ask your Care Team questions about the surgeon who will place the fistula. For example, how many fistulas did this surgeon place in the last year (or longer) that are still working?

- **Ask for a Vascular Access Plan to make sure that:**

- The access you have is the best choice for you
- You get a fistula if that is an option
- You save your blood vessels for future use
- Your access is ready when you need dialysis

- **Check out “Lifeline for a Lifetime”!**

- Visit the website at <http://www.esrdnetwork.org/patients/education/vascular-access.asp>. Click on “Lifeline for a Lifetime – Your Vascular Access”. Ask your healthcare team for assistance if you do not have a computer.
- Use the tools on the website to learn what is normal and not normal for your fistula
- Do the “One Minute Access Check” to find any potential problems. If you find a problem, get the help you need to save your lifeline!

Activity:

Draw a circle around the picture of which access is the better choice.

This information was created BY ESRD patients FOR ESRD patients!

To file a grievance or for questions, contact Network #14 at 1-877-886-4435 (phone), 972-503-3219 (fax), info@nw14.esrd.net, 4099 McEwen Rd, Suite 820, Dallas, TX 75244, or www.esrdnetwork.org.

