

Oxford Kidney Unit

What to do if you're bleeding from your fistula or graft (AVF or AVG)

Important information for patients and carers

Although rare, bleeding from a fistula or graft can be life threatening. If this happens you must seek urgent help.

Blood flow through your fistula or graft is under high pressure, as your artery and vein have been joined up together. Bleeding will not stop without proper and urgent treatment.

What should I do if my fistula or graft starts bleeding?

- Shout for help and dial 999. Tell them you are bleeding from a dialysis fistula.
- Apply firm pressure over the exact bleeding site, use gauze and two fingers or your thumb, or a bottle top as shown in the photo.
- Don't use a towel or absorbant cloth, as this will make it difficult to see where the fistula is bleeding from.
- Ask someone to press on your fistula scar, to slow the blood flow.
- Lie down. Lift your fistula or graft limb up to a level higher than your heart. Ask someone to help if it is difficult. Make sure you are still pressing in the right place.
- Try to stay calm.
- If the bleeding doesn't stop, apply even more pressure. Don't use a tourniquet.
- If the bleeding stops, keeps pressing on your fistula or graft until medical help arrives.
- You should still go to hospital, so your fistula can be checked by a renal doctor or surgeon.



If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

Author: Jayne Woodhouse, Jo Carter and Debbie Grove
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www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

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