



Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford Kidney Unit

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

# Caring for my Fistula or Graft (AVF or AVG)

If you have a fistula or  
graft that doesn't stop  
bleeding,  
**call 999**

Author: Debbie Grove, *Renal Nurse Consultant*  
Jo Carter, *Vascular Access Specialist Nurse*  
Jayne Woodhouse, *Advanced Nurse Practitioner*

November 2023

Review: November 2026

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)

Oxford Kidney Unit  
Website: [www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku)

OMI 85809

My fistula or graft is very important. It is the only way I can have dialysis.

**Please help me look after my fistula or graft by:**

- Checking for a buzz or blood flow every day (if I cannot do this).
- Not putting name bands on or taking BP readings from the limb.
- Not cannulating or taking blood from it (ONLY in a life threatening situation).
- Looking for signs of infection.

## What to do if your fistula or graft starts bleeding

- This can be **life threatening** and needs **urgent treatment**.
- Shout for help immediately. Dial 999, tell them you are bleeding from a dialysis fistula.
- Apply firm pressure over the bleeding site. Use a bottle top (hollow side facing your skin), or your thumb. Press exactly over the bleeding point.
- Ask someone to press on your fistula scar to slow the blood flow.
- Don't use a towel or absorbent cloth, as this will not stop the bleeding.
- Lie down. Ask someone to lift your fistula limb higher than your heart.
- Go to hospital even if the bleeding stops, to see a renal doctor or surgeon.