



York Teaching Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Your Temporary Dialysis Access Line

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:  
your local Renal Unit:

Easingwold, Renal Satellite Unit  
Tel: 01904 724800

Harrogate, Renal Satellite Unit  
Tel: 01423 554513

The York Hospital  
Tel: 01904 725370

(After 11 o'clock at night or on a Sunday call Ward 33 at  
The York Hospital on telephone 01904 726033)

Caring with pride

## Why do I need a temporary access line?

There may be several reasons for inserting a dialysis line:

- If you have developed sudden kidney failure, access to your bloodstream is required so that you can receive haemodialysis.
- If you have long-term kidney problems and need dialysis but have not yet had an operation to form an arterio-venous (AV) fistula or graft, you will need to have an access line inserted so that you can have haemodialysis.

You may already have a fistula or graft but if this is not ready to be used or stops working we might need to insert a line so that we can give you haemodialysis.

## What is an access line?

An access line is a temporary line that can stay in place for a few weeks. It will be removed as soon as possible. A line consists of a thin tube that is inserted into a vein, either in your neck or your groin. A Y-shaped connection with two tubes is attached to this; one tube is used to take blood from you to the dialysis machine, the other to return the blood to you.

If you have a line in your groin it will usually not be in place more than a week; a line in your neck may be left in for 4 to 5 weeks.

A doctor inserts the line. You will be given some local anaesthetic to make the skin numb. You will usually be able to return home a few hours after the line has been inserted, although occasionally an overnight stay in hospital is needed. If you have a line in your groin you will either have to stay in hospital or it will be removed after dialysis. Your line will be covered by a clear dressing at the point where it enters the skin, the two clamps near the end should always be closed and small caps should cover the two ends. For comfort the ends of the line are usually wrapped in gauze.

## How will having a line affect my activities?

We strongly advise that you do not go swimming with a line in place. However, you can carry on with other your usual activities as long as you follow some simple rules:

- Avoid getting your line wet.
- You may have a bath as long as you are careful to keep the line out of the water. We advise you not to shower as you will not be able to keep your line dry.
- Do not remove the clear dressing or caps from the line – this should only be done by a specialist renal nurse or doctor.

## Are there any potential problems that I should know about?

These are rare, but you need to know about them and what to do if they happen.

- There is a risk of infection when a dialysis line is in place. If the area around the line becomes painful, reddened, or you notice a discharge, or you start to feel unwell (you develop a temperature, become shivery or aching), then you should contact your renal unit as soon as possible for advice.
- If you notice bleeding around the tubes press firmly for 10 to 15 minutes with a soft pad on top of the clear dressing. If the bleeding does not stop call the Renal Unit. If it worsens or is severe, call 999 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.
- If the line comes out of position, call the Renal Unit. NEVER attempt to push a line back in.
- If the line falls out completely, press firmly on the site with a soft pad for 10 to 15 minutes to stop any bleeding and contact the Renal Unit.

- If the cap falls off either line make sure the clamps are still closed and replace the cap if it is not dirty and it is possible to do so. You must then call the Renal Unit as you will need to come and have the line cleaned and new caps put on. This is very important to ensure no air or infection gets into the line, either may be life threatening.
- If the clear dressing peels off there is a risk of infection, call the Renal Unit.

**Remember:** If you have any doubts please phone us, contact numbers on the front cover of this leaflet.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Sister Judith Hartley, Renal Medicine, telephone 01904 724800 or email [Judith.hartley@york.nhs.uk](mailto:Judith.hartley@york.nhs.uk)

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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