

Vascular Access Clinic Information for Patients

Vascular Laboratory, Outpatients Department 3 (OPD3)
Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, 51 Little France Crescent, EH16 4SA

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What is the Vascular Access Clinic?

When your kidneys are not working properly you can be given the option of dialysis, this will do the work of your kidneys.

Dialysis requires access to your bloodstream and an arteriovenous fistula will be required for this treatment. For this reason you will be asked to attend the Vascular Access Clinic.

What is a Fistula?

A fistula is created via a small surgical procedure to connect an artery and vein together. This is usually done in your arm. A fistula will provide the dialysis nurse with access to your bloodstream. This will allow you to be connected to the dialysis machine where your blood will be cleaned.

Who makes up the Vascular Access Team?

The Vascular Access team consists of Vascular Access Nurses who will meet you at your first clinic appointment and the Vascular Surgeons who will carry out the surgery.

Why do I need to be seen in the Vascular Access Clinic now?

Although you may not need dialysis straight away, fistula creation involves planning.

What happens during my clinic appointment?

Your appointment will take approximately 1 hour. During the appointment the Vascular Access Nurse will discuss with you fistula types, the operation to create a fistula, post operation care and follow up. We will also ask questions about your general health and answer any questions or concerns you may have. An ultrasound scan will be performed. This involves having some gel applied to your arm and the nurse will scan your arms to look at the size of your veins. If you are right handed, this will normally be done in the left arm.

What happens next?

Following the discussion and scan, if you are happy to proceed you will be added to the waiting list for fistula creation.

Having an unused fistula should not cause you any problems and does not determine when you will start dialysis. The decision to start dialysis will be discussed with you and your Renal Consultant

Who can I contact with queries or concerns?

If you have any problems or questions, you can speak to the Vascular Access Nurse on **0131 242 1205**.

Translation Services

This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.