

# Kidney Chronicles

IPRO END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK PROGRAM

2017 ISSUE 2

HELPFUL TIPS  
TO EMPOWER  
ESRD PATIENTS  
AS CONSUMERS



Better healthcare,  
realized.

## How to Have a Healthy Vascular Access

**A** healthy vascular access is important to help you get the best results with your dialysis. Whether your access is a fistula or a graft, you **MUST** check it every day. These checks will help catch any problems early and will help prevent your access from failing.

Once you learn these steps and practice them, it should take only one minute each day to complete the check:

1. Look at the skin over your access and compare it to the skin around your access. It should all look the same (over time, you may have some scarring where needles have been inserted).
2. Listen to the sound (known as the bruit) of your access by placing it next to your ear. The sound should remain the same from day to day.
3. Feel the vibration or buzz (known as the thrill) and the beating along the full length of the access. The thrill and beating should be the same every day.
4. If you notice any changes in the look, sound, vibration or beating of your access, report them to your healthcare team (physician, nurse, or technician).

### Look



### Listen



### Feel



For more information on checking your dialysis access, you can ask your health care team, go to <http://fistulafirst.esrdncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/patient-complete-guide.pdf> or contact the Network.

### How the Network Serves You

- Advocates for you;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care given to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

**In an emergency,  
if you can't reach  
your facility,  
contact us.**

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## Know how well your dialysis is working

With the right type and amount of dialysis, you will notice you are less tired, have a better appetite, feel less nausea, and have fewer hospital stays.

You can tell how well your dialysis is working by having a blood test measures KtV (pronounced “kay tee over vee”) number. This number tells your doctor or nurse how well dialysis is removing wastes from your body.



A safe number for your KtV, which means that you are receiving enough dialysis, is called an adequate hemodialysis number. For adult on hemodialysis the minimum adequate number is 1.2, for children the minimum is 1.8, and for peritoneal dialysis patients the minimum is 1.7. Your healthcare provider or dialysis center may set a higher dialysis goal for your personal health goals. Talk to your healthcare provider about your number, even if you feel fine.

You should always check how well your dialysis is working. It is possible to feel ok without enough dialysis for a while; however not getting adequate dialysis, over time, can make you feel weak and tired, which can lead to a higher risk of infection and prolonged bleeding. This can also shorten your life.

Here are some ways to make sure that you are getting enough dialysis:

- Go to all of your scheduled treatments and arrive on time.
- Stay for the full treatment time.
- Follow your diet and fluid restrictions.
- Follow the advice of your dialysis staff on how to take care of yourself.
- Check your KtV adequacy number each month.
- Talk to your doctor about which hemodialysis vascular access is best for you.
- Learn how to take care of your vascular access.

To learn more talk with your doctor or another member of your healthcare team at your dialysis facility.

To file a grievance, please contact your local ESRD Network:

### **IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New England**

1952 Whitney Avenue  
2nd Floor  
Hamden, CT 06517  
Patient Toll-Free: (866) 286-3773  
Main: (203) 387-9332  
Fax: (203) 389-9902  
E-mail: [info@nw1.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw1.esrd.net)  
Web: [network1.esrd.ipro.org](http://network1.esrd.ipro.org)

### **IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New York**

1799 Marcus Avenue  
Lake Success, NY 11042-1072  
Patient Toll-Free: (800) 238-3773  
Main: (516) 209-5578  
Fax: (516) 326-8929  
E-mail: [info@nw2.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw2.esrd.net)  
Web: [network2.esrd.ipro.org](http://network2.esrd.ipro.org)

### **IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of the South Atlantic**

909 Aviation Parkway  
Suite 300  
Morrisville, NC 27560  
Patient Toll-Free: (800) 524-7139  
Main: (919) 463-4500  
Fax: (919) 388-9637  
E-mail: [info@nw6.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw6.esrd.net)  
Web: [network6.esrd.ipro.org](http://network6.esrd.ipro.org)

### **IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of the Ohio River Valley**

3201 Enterprise Parkway  
Suite 210  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
Patient Toll-free: (844) 819-3010  
Main: (216) 593-0001  
Fax: (216) 593-0101  
E-mail: [info@nw9.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw9.esrd.net)  
Web: [network9.esrd.ipro.org](http://network9.esrd.ipro.org)



**Better healthcare, realized.**

The IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network Program, ESRD contractor for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont (NW1), New York (NW2); Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina (NW6) and Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky (NW9) developed this material under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. CMS Contract Numbers: NW1: HHSM-500-2016-00019C; NW2: HHSM-500-2016-00020C; NW6: HHSM-500-2016-00006C; and NW9: HHSM-500-2016-00009C