

GRAFT INSTRUCTIONS

Feel/Look at the:

Normal

NOT Normal

STEP 1. SKIN - Look at the skin over your graft first. There should be no redness, swelling, pain, or drainage. Next, lightly feel your access. It should not feel warm, swollen or painful.

STEP 2. BULGE - Look for bulges in your graft. Bulges are sometimes seen when the dialysis needles are put in the same area every time. Bulges should not have shiny skin, ooze blood, or have skin that “peels” and does not heal. Bulges may need surgery.

STEP 3. PULSE - Lightly use your fingertips and feel your entire graft. A faint beating may or may not be felt. A strong beating is the sign of a problem. Pay special attention to the where your vein and artery join the graft material - this is the most common place for problems.

STEP 4. THRILL - Lightly use your fingers and feel your entire access, paying special attention to areas where the thrill is strong or weak. The thrill should feel like the purring of a cat.



Lightly move up your arm feeling for changes.



A change in thrill or no thrill is a sign of a problem.



A strong pounding is a sign of a problem.



When you feel the your graft, remember, “PULSE IS BAD, THRILL IS GOOD.” The thrill means blood is flowing; the pulse means there is something trying to pinch off the blood flow (stenosis). Keep your staff informed of changes.