



CARE OF CATHETERS

Your catheter exit site should be cleaned with each dialysis treatment and clean dry gauze applied. You must wear a mask for the dressing change, on and off procedures for dialysis or any time your dialysis catheter is opened for use. Ask your dialysis staff what the unit specific dressing procedure is and how you are to care for the catheter at home. Specifically ask about mupirocin ointment.

For non-cuffed catheters, the *sutures* must remain in place for as long as you have the catheter. For tunneled cuffed catheters, the sutures should be removed once the catheter is healed into place to prevent infection from the sutures.

Your catheter caps must remain on the catheter and only removed by the dialysis staff. The clamps must remain closed at all times. Your dialysis catheter must only be used by the dialysis staff unless authorized by your nephrologist. If the clamp comes undone, close the clamp immediately. If a catheter cap becomes loose and falls off, make sure the catheter remains clamped and report to your dialysis center or emergency room for you are at risk for an infection or air entering your bloodstream and need urgent care. If any portion of the catheter develops a hole, leak or part separation, then you must ensure the catheter is clamped off above the problem area. The catheter clamp may be movable and can be slid up on the body of the catheter to close off the catheter, or you may need to kink the catheter with your fingers to *occlude* the catheter and then call 911. If blood leaks out, air can enter and cause an air embolism. You need immediate help to prevent serious injury.