

Showering with a Hemodialysis Catheter

- ▶ **Keep your bandage clean and dry. A wet dressing may lead to an infection.**
- ▶ A tub bath with the catheter out of the water is the best way to keep your bandage dry.



If you choose to shower, this pamphlet provides tips to keep your bandage clean and dry.

Shower only **IF**:

- Your catheter has been in place for at least 3 months; and
- Your exit site is well-healed; and
- You have not had a previous catheter infection.

Tips for showering with a hemodialysis catheter:

1. The best time to shower is right before dialysis so the dressing can be changed.
2. **Before getting into the shower:** (It is best to have someone assist you).
 - a) Make sure your exit site dressing is secure.
 - b) Keep your catheter dressing dry by:
 - i. Placing a piece of plastic over the catheter limbs and the dressing. Use waterproof tape to secure the plastic to your skin,
OR
 - ii. Purchasing a product that is meant for showering. Speak with your vascular access nurse about options.
3. **When in the shower,** use a hand held shower if possible. Direct the spray away from your catheter.
4. **Once out of the shower,** gently pat dry the plastic wrap or bag with a clean towel. Remove the piece of plastic.
5. If the dressing peels off or gets wet, wash your hands and remove what is left of it, if it can be easily removed. If it is hard to remove, leave in place. Put on a clean dressing. Go to your dialysis unit for a new dressing.
6. Be aware of signs of infection. Contact the hemodialysis unit if:
 - There is redness, warmth or pain near the catheter.
 - There is oozing or drainage from your catheter exit site.
 - You have swelling or itching around your catheter or neck.
 - You are feverish and have any of the above symptoms.
 - You notice the catheter outside your skin seems to be getting longer.
 - Your catheter is accidentally pulled and there is bleeding around the exit site.

