

SUMMER 2019  
ESRD NETWORK 18

# Patient Newsletter

Do you or someone you know want to quit smoking?

Smoking can increase your risk for very serious health problems, but it's never too late to quit. Quitting smoking can decrease your risk of an early death and improve your overall health. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>



## Report Grievances

To file a grievance about your dialysis facility, contact Network 18 by calling:

1-800-637-4767

700 N. Brand Blvd., Suite 405  
Glendale, California 91203

[www.esrdnetwork18.org](http://www.esrdnetwork18.org)

## Dialysis Facility Compare

Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) is a web-based resource from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. This resource provides detailed information about Medicare-certified dialysis facilities and the quality of care provided at each unit. Information includes:

- Quality measures (e.g., anemia control, patient survival rate, waste removal during treatment)
- Address and phone number
- Shifts starting after 5:00 p.m.
- Facility ownership (profit or nonprofit)
- Number of hemodialysis stations
- Types of dialysis offered

Whether you are new to dialysis or looking to transfer, DFC is used to locate a new facility, to verify the quality of care at your current unit, or to locate a facility for temporary treatment when traveling.

## How to Use Dialysis Facility Compare

**Step 1:** Visit [www.medicare.gov/dialysisfacilitycompare](http://www.medicare.gov/dialysisfacilitycompare).

**Step 2:** Enter the city name and state (or ZIP code) for the area you need. You can also enter a dialysis facility name or search for all options in that area. You can further filter these options by distance, type of dialysis provided or shifts starting after 5 p.m.

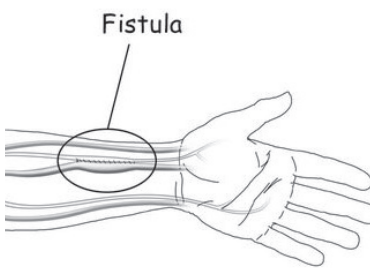
**Step 3:** Select the dialysis facilities for which you want more information. If you select more than one facility, you can compare the information on all the dialysis facilities you choose.

You can compare the services and quality information online or print individual summaries for each dialysis facility. Use these summaries when you talk with your doctor or health care provider about a dialysis facility, or when you call or visit a dialysis facility.

## Vascular Access and You

Your vascular access (VA) is your life line. Without it, dialysis would not be possible. There are several types of VAs so it is important to know, what type is best for you and how you should take care of it.

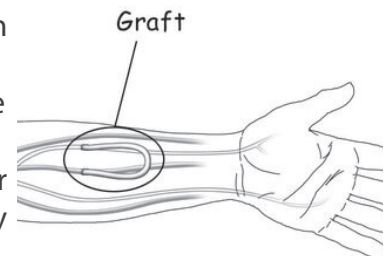
### Arteriovenous Fistula (AVF)



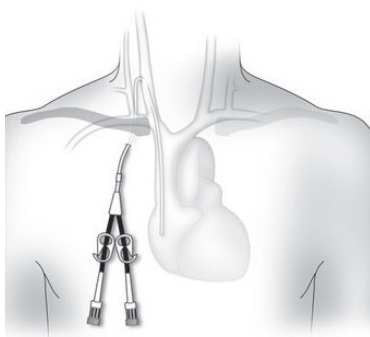
An AVF, also known as a fistula, is made by connecting an artery to a vein during a surgical procedure. An artery is a tube in your body that carries blood away from your heart and takes it everywhere in your body. A vein is a tube that returns blood to your heart from all the places in your body. The doctor creates a fistula for hemodialysis during surgery. He or she will usually place it in your arm but in some instances it may be placed in your leg. When you get your dialysis, needles will be placed in your AVF to pull your blood from your body to the machine to be cleaned and then return the clean blood back to your body. It is important that you keep your AVF clean and don't carry heavy things with your fistula arm. Don't wear clothing that is tight on your fistula and when you sleep, try not to sleep on the fistula.

A graft is another option for a permanent access and is created by a surgeon connecting a vein to an artery in your arm using a piece of synthetic material or bovine (cow) vein. While this is a great option for some people, a graft is more prone to infection and clotting than the above AVF option, since a foreign material is being placed in your arm. However similar to the AVF, needles will be placed in your graft during dialysis to pull your blood from your body to the machine to be cleaned and then return the clean blood back to your body. It is important that you keep your graft clean and don't carry heavy things with your graft arm. Don't wear clothing that is tight on your graft and when you sleep, try not to sleep on the graft arm.

### Graft



### Central Venous Catheter (CVC)



A CVC is often placed in people who have to start dialysis suddenly. AVFs and grafts take time to mature and cannot be used right away. A CVC can be used right away but is meant to be a temporary option while your permanent access heals and gets ready for use. A CVC is a plastic tube that is placed in the central vein in your chest that ends in your heart, or can be placed in the large vein in your groin. A CVC is much like an open window and, therefore, is very prone to infection. Keeping your CVC site clean is extremely important and will require assistance from your nurse at the dialysis facility at each treatment. Because there is such a high risk for infection, it is recommended that you get a permanent access placed and get the CVC removed as soon as possible. It is only in very rare cases that some patients will keep a CVC for the long term. If you have a CVC, talk to your Nephrologist right away to find out how you can get a permanent access placed.