

NORTH BAY GENERAL SURGERY

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Arteriovenous (AV) Fistula Creation

YOUR SURGERY DATE: _____ **with DR.** _____

The Preadmission Clinic (PAC) will be calling you to arrange an appointment, at this appointment they will give you the arrival time for your surgery. Occasionally we are required to reschedule surgery dates due to emergency cases or urgent cancer cases. We make every effort to give you as much notice and will work with you to book a new date.

What is an AV fistula? An arteriovenous, or AV fistula is a type of access used for hemodialysis. An AV fistula is a connection between an artery and a vein creating a ready source with a rapid flow of blood. The fistula is located under the skin and is used during dialysis to access the bloodstream.

What are the risks of an AV fistula creation? All surgeries carry risks, which include: Bleeding, infection, scars, pain, wound complications, hernia development at the site, heart and lung complications.

Risk specific to AV fistula creation: Bleeding, swelling of the extremity, aneurysm formation, decreased blood flow to extremity, and heart related problems (heart failure etc.).

What should I expect before my surgery? Prior to your surgery, the pre-admission clinic at North Bay Regional Health Centre will book an appointment with you. This will either be done at the pre-admission clinic at the hospital or may be booked over the phone. During this appointment the nurse will gather health information from you and give you information about what to expect before/after surgery and answer any questions you may have. At this time, you may also have blood tests, an electrocardiogram, or any consultations with any other physicians as requested by your surgeon.

DO NOT SHAVE THE AREA PRIOR TO SURGERY, this can cause a greater infection risk. Excess hair will be removed at the hospital if required.

What should I expect the day of surgery?

The pre-admission clinic should give you all the information you need for the day of surgery. Please arrive to the day surgery unit at the North Bay Regional Health Center at the time instructed. AV fistula creation is done as a day surgery. This means that you will come into the hospital, have your surgery done, and then be discharged on the same day. It is important that you have someone to drive you home following surgery as you will not be allowed to drive or operate heavy machinery for a minimum of 24hrs after undergoing a general anesthetic.

What should I expect after surgery?

Surgical after care of your AV fistula is determined by the Renal Unit at the North Bay Regional Hospital. Please follow all the Renal Units Instructions and use the instructions below as a guide only.

Dressing: Immediately after your surgery you will have a dressing over the surgical site. Before you are discharged you will need to go to the Renal Unit and a nurse will check your bandage. If there is a lot of blood on it, the nurse will change it. You will be instructed to check your bandage and call the renal unit if there is bloody drainage.

Incision: Once your dressing is removed, it is important to keep your incision clean and dry. You need to clean your access arm daily with mild soap and water. There will be staples closing the incision, they will be removed 14 days after the surgery. You will be given an appointment to have these removed at the Renal Unit.

Pain: There may be pain from the incision site. Your throat may also be sore for the first 48 hours after surgery. You may be prescribed something for pain; or alternatively you may also take Tylenol 650mg every 4 hours. Try to keep your arm raised on a pillow to reduce swelling after surgery.

Diet: Immediately after surgery you may feel nauseated. Start by drinking small amounts of clear liquid. If you do not feel nauseated, you may return to a normal diet.

Activity: Following the surgery it is best to go home and rest. You may have been given some instructions on how to 'exercise' your fistula, please follow these instructions. You can return to your normal activities the day following surgery but **DO NOT**:

- Wear tight fitting clothing
- Bump or hit the fistula on anything
- Carry any heavy items using the affected arm
- Do not push or do strenuous activity with the affected arm (vacuuming, mowing the lawn etc.)

Hygiene: After the bandage has been removed it is ok to shower. Do not scrub or rub the incision area and carefully pat dry after showering. You may want to keep a band aid or light dressing over the site until it heals, so that it does not get irritated by clothing. If you do apply a dressing over it, ensure it is clean and dry. Do not soak in the bathtub until the incisions are fully healed. Usually about 3 weeks. Do not put powder, cream, make-up, deodorants or perfumes on the incision site until after it has healed.

Care of your fistula:

- DO NOT have your blood pressure taken on this arm.
- DO NOT have blood specimens or needles inserted into this arm.
- DO NOT sleep on it as this could stop the blood flow.
- You may have some mild swelling in the hand or arm after the surgery. Keep your arm up on a pillow for 2-3 days after surgery to keep it from swelling.
- Check for a vibration or "thrill" at least every day. Notify the kidney clinic if you do not feel the vibration.
- Carry your "Save my Veins" card with you and present to healthcare staff, so that staff are aware of your AV fistula/graft.

Follow-up with surgeon: You should follow-up with your surgeon 4-6 weeks after your surgery. Please call your surgeon or report to the Emergency Department if you have experienced:

- Bluish skin, cold fingers, and/or unusual feeling in the operated hand or arm.
- Excessive swelling of your arm, hand, or fingers.
- Not being able to feel "thrill" over fistula (no vibration or pulse).
- Severe pain that is not relieved by taking your pain medication.
- Serious injury to the fistula (bad fall or injury to the arm that has caused a skin injury).
- Redness, swelling or pus from the wound.
- Excessive bleeding from the site that will not stop after applying 15 min of direct pressure.
- Fever

Important numbers:

Dr. Kumar office: 705-472-2646 ext 2
Kidney Clinic: 705-474-8600 ext 3740

Renal Unit: 705-474-8600 ext 3777
Body Access Nurse: 705-474-8600 ext 3773