

Dialysis Access

Before you can begin dialysis, either peritoneal or hemodialysis, your doctor will arrange for you to have an access placed.



In peritoneal dialysis this access will allow you to safely use your peritoneal membrane for dialysis. A small, soft plastic tube (catheter) is inserted by a doctor into your abdomen. The catheter is about one-quarter inch in diameter, and is usually placed about one inch below and to the side of the belly button. Four to six inches of the catheter remain outside the body. Your exit site is the place where your catheter comes out of your abdomen. Your doctor or nurse will discuss with you how they want you to care for your exit site. How soon the catheter can be used will depend upon the type of catheter, your doctor, and your condition.

In hemodialysis an access is needed to have a safe way to get to your blood. In hemodialysis there are temporary and permanent accesses. If hemodialysis is needed right away a catheter may be used; this is a temporary access. This catheter may be called a central line. This type of catheter is placed by a doctor and is inserted into a large vein, either in the neck (jugular vein), behind the collarbone (subclavian vein) or in the groin (femoral vein). This temporary access can be used immediately and this access may be used until a permanent access is available.



