

Dialysis Professional

“Ready, Set, Go” The Steps to Catheter Freedom Week 1: Graft Healing & Readiness Check



- Perform graft healing check at each treatment or when patient reports a change.
 - Reinforce to patient the importance of daily graft checks.
 - Listen to the patient.

Look



Listen



Feel



Were there any abnormal findings during the graft healing and readiness check?

No

Document that there were no abnormal findings.

Yes

Document findings and refer to expert clinician.

Continued...

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Look

The dressing is **clean and dry**.

The skin around the dressing **looks like it did before surgery**.

The hand looks the same as it did before surgery.

When the dressing is no longer needed, the surgery site is **clean and dry**.

Once healed, the skin over the graft is all one **color** and **looks like the skin around it**.



The dressing is **wet** or **soiled**.
There is **drainage** on the dressing.

The arm is **bruised** and/or the hand is **not the normal color**.

There is **redness, swelling, or drainage**.

Listen

When you listen with a stethoscope, You **hear the bruit along the length of the graft**.

The bruit **sounds like a “whoosh,”** or for some, like a **drum beat**.



There is **no sound**, or the bruit is **not as loud** as the last time it was checked.

Sound is **different** than the sound of a normal bruit.

Feel

You **can feel** the graft.



You **cannot** feel the graft and/or the hand of the affected arm is **cold to the touch**.

Thrill is a vibration or buzz that can be felt most prominently where the graft joins the artery and where it joins the vein.

You **can feel** the thrill.

You **cannot** feel the thrill or it is **weaker** than the last time it was checked.

Continued...

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Feel

Pulse: A slight beating that feels like a heartbeat. Fingers placed lightly on the graft move slightly.



Pulsatile: The beat is **stronger** than a normal pulse. Fingers placed lightly on the graft **rise and fall with each beat**.



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This material was prepared by the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) National Coordinating Center (NCC) contractor, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under CMS contract: HHSM-500-2013-NW002C; and was adapted by the contractor under CMS contract #: HHSM-500-2016-00007C. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy nor imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Publication Number: FL-ESRD NCC-7N1T02-10032016-07

