



# Before beginning dialysis, stop to LOOK, LISTEN, AND FEEL



## Signs of a healthy fistula

- No swelling
  - No areas that balloon out
  - No redness
  - No open sores
  - No scabs
  - No drainage
  - No bruising
- Bruit is a continuous, low pitch and sounds like the ocean
- Thrill is steady where the fistula begins
  - Temperature is the same in both arms and both hands

### LOOK



### LISTEN



### FEEL



## Signs that something may be wrong

- Swelling
  - Areas that balloon out
  - Redness
  - Open sores
  - Scabs
  - Drainage
  - Bruising
- Bruit is high pitched and sounds like a whistle or a whip
- Thrill is a weak pulse felt 6 in. above start of fistula
  - Temperature of access arm and/or hand is warm to touch
  - Temperature is different between hands and arms.

### ASK THE PATIENT

- Is there absence of numbness, pain, or bleeding?
- Was the access arm washed before treatment?
- Is the access extremity free of tight clothing and accessories?

### TREATMENT REVIEW

- Did patient have bleeding time < 15 minutes?
- Was the needle insertion performed without difficulty?
- Was the dialysis machine flow pressure stable (if performed)?

### LOOK

- At the start of treatment, is the venous pressure <120 mm Hg with BFR at 200 ml/m?
- Is pre-pump arterial pressure within the standard parameters (0 to -250 mm Hg) at prescribed blood flow rate?
- Was blood flow rate maintained during treatment?

### MONTHLY REVIEW

- Is the URR or Kt/v result adequate and stable?
- Has access been free of clots that require interventions this month?
- Are the results of recirculation studies adequate and stable?



Prepared by the Renal Network of the Upper Midwest, Inc. and the Upper Midwest Fistula First Coalition. Please call 1-800-973-3773 for questions or reprint requests.