

## **Hemodialysis Access**

This surgery is usually required for patients with severe kidney disease, who need dialysis. Dialysis is a procedure to clean the blood. This is needed when the kidneys fail to do their job for any reason.

But before this can be done, doctors must create a “high volume access” to the blood in the body. Different accesses can be created, all of which supply a large volume of blood. An access is usually created in the arm.

The “access” is made by either a fistula or a graft. A fistula directly connects an artery to a vein. A graft uses a synthetic tube to make the connection. A fistula takes weeks or months to develop before it is ready to be used. A graft can be used within a few weeks after it is made. A doctor decides which approach is best for each individual.

During dialysis, needles are placed into the “access” to carry blood to and from the dialysis machine (“dialyzer”). The whole dialysis procedure usually takes 3 to 5 hours.