

# 10 Tips for preventing infection in haemodialysis

## Be aware

Haemodialysis is a risky business infection-wise. It is important that you understand the infection risks to you, and what risk you might pose to others. The following simple strategies will help you minimise these risks and keep you healthy.

## Wash your hands

Good hand hygiene, including hand washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol based hand rub, is the most important thing you can do to prevent an infection. Keep your hands clean and always wash your hands before handling your access site.

## Insist on the best

It isn't just you that needs to keep your hands clean! Good hand hygiene is essential for all of your carers and dialysis team. Feel free to ask your dialysis team and carers to wash their hands!

## Keep it clean

Your access site is important, but it can be the site for a serious infection. You can help prevent these infections by washing your fistula site with an antiseptic hand wash before dialysis. Your carers and dialysis team will use an 'aseptic' (free from bacteria) technique to make sure that you aren't put at risk.

## Get to the point

Hepatitis B vaccination will protect against hepatitis B infection. Unfortunately the vaccine doesn't work as well in people with kidney disease. But even partial protection from the vaccination, combined with a high standard of cleanliness in the dialysis units will protect you. Vaccines research is improving the standards of immunisation; your dialysis team will keep you updated.

## And stick to it

As you know – getting stuck with a needle is no fun – it's even worse when it is someone else's used needle. Make sure you and your caregivers dispose of sharps into a safe sharps container immediately after use.

## Dress for success

Your blood can be an infection risk to your carers and dialysis team. If there is a chance of a blood splash from your lines, or during needling, your carer should be wearing eye/face protection, gloves and protection for their clothing.

## Spot the difference

Good cleaning practices help prevent bacteria being passed from one person to another. Your dialysis team will clean your chair and equipment after every use – every time.

## Be alert

Know the signs and symptoms of infection and tell your carers or dialysis team immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Fever
- Chills
- If you have a catheter or are generally feeling unwell/weak
- Drainage from the catheter site
- Redness or tenderness around the catheter site.

## Be a squeaky wheel

If you are worried about infection prevention speak with your carers or dialysis team. Everyone is responsible for preventing infections and working together will give you the best results.

**For more information about preventing infection in maintenance haemodialysis, go to the dialysis website**

**[www.health.vic.gov.au/renaldialysis](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/renaldialysis)**