Choosing your access type

**PERITONEAL DIALYSIS CATHETER**

*What it is:*  
A type of access created by a flexible tube placed in your abdomen—with a small piece of tubing left outside of the body that can be covered when not in use.

*Which type(s) of dialysis it’s used for:*  
Peritoneal dialysis (PD) only

*Healing time required before use:*  
A few days to 2 weeks, depending on the urgency to start treatment

*Key considerations:*  
- The is the only access type for PD.
- No needles are used to perform dialysis.
- Simple steps are needed to keep your access site clean.
- A clean and sanitized at-home treatment area is important to avoid infection.
- A backup AV fistula may be helpful in case hemodialysis is needed in the future.

**FISTULA (AV OR AVF)**

*What it is:*  
An access site formed by the joining of a vein and an artery in your arm

*Which type(s) of dialysis it’s used for:*  
Hemodialysis (in-center or at-home)

*Healing time required before use:*  
6–8 weeks

*Key considerations:*  
- It's the very best choice for hemodialysis if you are eligible for this type of access.
- It’s the most natural access site since it’s formed from your own blood vessels.
- A fistula allows for optimal blood flow and has the lowest chance of infection and clotting.
- If you are unable to have surgery for a fistula before you begin treatment, it may still be possible to get a fistula after starting hemodialysis.
**What it is:**
An access site formed by a piece of soft tubing that connects a vein and an artery in your arm.

**Which type(s) of dialysis it’s used for:**
Hemodialysis (in-center or at-home)

**Healing time required before use:**
2–3 weeks

**Key considerations:**
- This access type is a great alternative if your veins are too small or weak for a fistula.
- A graft offers better blood flow and has a lower chance of infection than a hemodialysis catheter.
- If you have a graft that fails, you and your doctor may be able to reconsider a fistula or a new graft in another location. Veins can sometimes get larger or stronger with time on dialysis.

**What it is:**
A type of access created by a tube placed in your neck, chest or groin—often used temporarily while a graft or fistula is healing.

**Which type(s) of dialysis it’s used for:**
Hemodialysis (in-center or at-home)—though it is usually not recommended for the long term.

**Healing time required before use:**
None—can be used immediately

**Key considerations:**
- A hemodialysis catheter has a higher risk of infection and clotting due to the catheter tip’s location being near the heart.
- It’s often used temporarily until fistula or graft surgery can be performed.
- The access site must be kept dry.
- There are limited bathing options and swimming is not recommended.

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**ON DIALYSIS, YOUR ACCESS SITE IS YOUR LIFELINE**
Visit [www.FreseniusKidneyCare.com/Treatment](http://www.FreseniusKidneyCare.com/Treatment) to explore each dialysis treatment option and to learn more about access types.