Facts you should know!

On average, patients who dialyze with a catheter are 15 times more likely to get a vascular-access related infection than patients using an arteriovenous (AV) fistula for dialysis.

Patients who receive dialysis with a catheter spend on average 35 days per year in the hospital compared with only 7.7 days for patients with an AV fistula.

Patients who dialyze with a catheter have two times the risk of death compared to patients who use an AV fistula.

Patients using catheters have a 38 percent greater risk for a major heart problem.

Patients who use an AV fistula report greater physical activity, energy, and emotional and social wellbeing compared to patients using a catheter.

Midwest Kidney Network is a private, nonprofit organization and contractor with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS).

Our mission is to assess and improve the quality of care provided to people with kidney disease through the following actions:

- Respond to patient concerns about their care.
- Help providers improve care and quality of life for dialysis and kidney transplant patients.
- Maintain the patient database that supports the national kidney disease program.
- Partner with other ESRD Networks, State Survey Agencies, ESRD providers, and organizations helping people with kidney disease.

Dialysis patients share their stories about choosing vascular access.

Talk to your health care team today about being evaluated for an AV fistula.
"I’m glad that my catheter allows me to leave sooner after dialysis, and I do not have to wait like other patients."

"Complications with my catheter put me in the hospital; I wish I could be spending more time at home with family."

"I like having a catheter—I don’t have to wait around for my needle sites to clot."

"I do have to wait around for a few minutes after dialysis for my sites to clot, but I haven’t been in the hospital since my catheter was removed."

"With this catheter, I don’t think I look as sick as those patients with a fistula in their arm."

"I am glad now that I have a fistula. I look and feel physically better! With my catheter, I couldn’t hide my lack of wellness."

"I chose a catheter. I feel like I have enough energy."

"I feel so much better now that I can be out more with my friends and family. I couldn’t do this with a catheter."

"Infection is a risk, but if I keep my catheter clean I can control it."

"With a catheter, my wife cared for me at home. Even her nursing skills could not keep me free from infections. I don’t worry about that now that I have a fistula."