



## AV Fistula/AV Graft Discharge Instructions

### FOLLOW UP

- If you do not have a follow up visit already scheduled after surgery, please call Kristin at 720-848-0833 to schedule.
- You should be seen in clinic 2-3 weeks after surgery.

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- **NEVER** let any healthcare provider check your blood pressure, draw blood, or start an IV in the arm you have designated for your fistula/graft. These procedures can damage the blood vessels and make them unusable for dialysis access surgery.
  - a. If you are admitted to the hospital at any time, **DO NOT** allow the healthcare team to place a PICC (peripheral inserted central catheter) line. These catheters are commonly used for patients that need long term antibiotics, IV nutrition, and chemotherapy. These catheters can also damage the blood vessels, making them unusable for dialysis access surgery. If you ever need long term IV access, ask the healthcare team to place a small bore catheter instead. Your healthcare providers can always call Dr. Kennealey with any questions.
- **DO NOT** stop taking your Aspirin, Plavix, or Coumadin unless specifically instructed to do so by Dr. Kennealey.
- Take all of your home medications as you normally do on the day of surgery. If you are diabetic and take insulin, take only **HALF** of your morning dose the day of surgery.
- Before and after surgery, please do the forearm exercises with the stress ball provided. You should squeeze and release the ball rapidly for 10 minutes 6 times per day. This will help the fistula mature quicker.

### AFTER SURGERY

- The recovery room nurse will give you a stethoscope after surgery. You should be able to hear the “bruit” and feel the “thrill” of the fistula/graft. If at any time you cannot hear the bruit or feel the thrill, call Dr. Kennealey.
- AV fistulas can take up to 8 weeks to mature; AV grafts can be used 2-6 weeks after they are placed.
- Consider obtaining a medical bracelet that identifies the presence of your fistula/graft. These can be purchased at Target, Walgreens, etc.

## ***AV Fistula/AV Graft Discharge Instructions, Continued***

### **DIET**

- You may resume a normal diet as tolerated after leaving the hospital on the day of surgery.

### **INCISION CARE**

- Please remove the outer dressing 48 hours after surgery.
- It is **okay** to shower after surgery with the plastic dressing in place and once it has been removed.
- Please call Dr. Kennealey's office at 720-848-0833 if:
  - Your incision becomes red, warm, or drains pus as these are signs of infection.
  - You develop a temperature higher than 101°F (38.3C).
  - Your bandage is **SOAKED** with blood; it is **NORMAL** to experience some bleeding after surgery.
  - The "thrill" (feel) of the fistula/graft goes away.
  - Your fingers become cold, numb, or blue.