



Pocket Guide to Managing Infection Risks for Dialysis Patients with Central Venous Catheter (CVC) Access

A tool to help patients and caregivers have more effective dialogue with their healthcare teams.

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Managing Infection Risks for Dialysis Patients with Central Venous Catheter (CVC) Access

What is a CRBSI?

If you are on dialysis, particularly hemodialysis, there is an increased risk of infections at the site where the dialysis access is placed. Individuals on long-term dialysis, who have a central venous catheter (CVC) as their form of vascular access are at an **increased risk** of exposure to Cather-Related Bloodstream Infections (CRBSIs). CRBSIs occur when bacteria or other pathogens enter the bloodstream through the catheter used during dialysis treatments. The likelihood of developing a CRBSI increases with improper care, poor hygiene practices, and inadequate monitoring. Additionally, infections can occur even when rigorous infection prevention methods are used but they are limited to the outside parts of the catheter or to the immediate 'hub'. The dialysis catheter has a tip that sits very close to the heart and has two very long tubes, or lumens, that can also harbor bacteria or other pathogens that can cause an infection. However, the risk of these infections can be significantly reduced through clear communications with your healthcare team and making a choice together on the best care strategy for you.

Reducing the Risk of CRBSIs in Dialysis Treatment: Why It Matters

As a dialysis patient, maintaining your health, strength and preventing complications are essential for your overall health and well-being. One of the most serious risks associated with dialysis are CRBSIs. These infections can lead to severe complications, prolonged hospital stays, and even life-threatening situations. Understanding the risks and taking proactive steps to reduce them is crucial.

The Importance of Clear and Effective Communication with Your Healthcare Team

Effective communication between you and your healthcare team is key to reducing your risk of CRBSIs. By asking the right questions and being informed of your care choices, you can play a more active role in your treatment. This guide will help you start important conversations with your doctors, nurses, dialysis technicians, and care partners about how to minimize the risk of CRBSIs in your dialysis treatments.

Use this guide to ask questions, understand your choices and options, and make informed decisions about your care. Your health is a shared responsibility, and together with your healthcare team, you can work to reduce your risk of infections and ensure the best possible outcomes from your dialysis treatment.

Let's Start the Conversation! Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team

CRBSIs are a serious risk for dialysis patients who receive dialysis treatments through a central venous catheter (CVC), but with proactive communication, you can work with your healthcare team to minimize this risk. The following questions are designed to help you start a meaningful conversation with your doctors, nurses, dialysis technicians, and other healthcare providers.

These questions will help you better understand the steps you can take to reduce the risk of CRBSIs, as well as the measures your healthcare team is taking on your behalf. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides a foundation for discussing CRBSIs and ensuring that you are receiving the safest possible.

How to Use This Guide:

- **Prioritize Your Concerns:** Review the questions below and select the ones that are most relevant to your situation. Bring these to your next appointment.
- **Take Notes:** Write down the answers provided by your healthcare team, and don't hesitate to ask for clarification if something isn't clear. You may even consider bringing a loved one, trusted friend, or care partner with you for an extra set of ears!
- **Follow Up:** Use this guide as a living document. After your initial discussion, continue to ask questions and update your care plan as needed.

By actively participating in your care, you can help reduce your risk of CRBSIs and ensure that your dialysis treatments are as safe and effective as possible.

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team About Reducing CRBSIs

1. What steps are taken to minimize the risk of CRBSIs during my dialysis treatment?
2. What are the warning signs and/or symptoms of a CRBSI that I should be aware of?
3. What specific hygiene practices should I follow before, during, and after dialysis to reduce infection risk?
4. What should I do if I notice symptoms of a potential CRBSI between dialysis treatments?
5. What is an antimicrobial and what role do antimicrobials play in reducing the risk of CRBSIs?
6. Are you using any antimicrobial treatments to reduce the risk of CRBSIs?
7. Are there any new, FDA-approved care innovation to prevent CRBSIs that has not been offered to me at this dialysis clinic?
8. Am I a candidate for another type of dialysis vascular access, such as a graft or fistula?

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