Resources for vascular access information

- **Understanding Your Hemodialysis Access Options** by American Association of Kidney Patients, revised 3/06. For an electronic copy, visit: http://www.aakp.org/brochures/access-options

**Web sites:**
- http://esrd.ipro.org
- http://www.aakp.org
- http://www.kidney.org/patients/

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**Quiz**

1. What is the vascular access of choice?
   a. Fistula  
   b. Graft  
   c. Catheter

2. What vascular access has a history of lasting many years?
   a. Fistula  
   b. Graft  
   c. Catheter

3. What access has fewer complications?
   a. Fistula  
   b. Graft  
   c. Catheter

4. What access type is used for emergencies and should only be used temporarily?
   a. Fistula  
   b. Graft  
   c. Catheter

**Answers:**
# Vascular Access for Hemodialysis

## FISTULA - BEST CHOICE
- **Locations**: Forearm, Upper Arm, Thigh
- **Advantages**:
  - Lasts many years
  - Less chance of infection
  - Higher blood flow rates
  - Fewer complications
- **Disadvantages**:
  - Takes the longest to mature (develop)
  - May fail to mature, due to other health issues

## GRAFT - ALTERNATE CHOICE
- **Locations**: Forearm, Upper Arm, Thigh, Chest, Neck (jugular vein), Groin (femoral vein), Chest (subclavian vein) should be avoided
- **Advantages**:
  - Can be used in two weeks after placement
  - Use for when a fistula does not work
  - Use for patients with special health issues
- **Disadvantages**:
  - Clotting
  - Infection
  - Swelling
  - Frequent interventions required
  - May affect blood flow to the hand (Steal Syndrome)

## CATHETER - EMERGENCY OR TEMPORARY ONLY
- **Locations**: Forearm, Upper Arm, Thigh, Chest (subclavian vein)
- **Advantages**:
  - Can be used in an emergency
  - Can be used while other access types are maturing
- **Disadvantages**:
  - Clotting
  - Infection
  - Lower blood flow rates
  - Vessel damage
  - Designed for short-term use only