

AV Fistula

What:

To assess the flow of blood within an AV fistula for dialysis access. This examination is to ensure that adequate volumes of blood are flowing through this fistula, and to check there are no narrowings or blockages of the fistula.

Why:

Patients can suffer from severe kidney function for a number of reasons, i.e. diabetes, and unfortunately the list for a kidney transplant can be quite lengthy. In the wait for a transplant, a surgical procedure is sometimes performed where an artery and vein are joined in the arm to create an accessible pathway for dialysis. This examination is to ensure that adequate volumes of blood are flowing through this fistula and to check there are no narrowings or blockages of the fistula.

Involves:

- The scan is performed in a private ultrasound room where a sonographer will explain the scan and answer any questions you may have.
- Any clothing covering the AV fistula will be removed. Any bras/underwear will be left on. Also any wrist jewellery, i.e. watches, will be removed.
- You will either be asked to lie down on an examination bed or sit on the examination bed with your arm resting on a pillow. It will depend on how the sonographer prefers to perform the examination.
- An ultrasound probe and a small amount of gel will be placed on the skin over the area of the AV fistula and also above and below the fistula.
- The sound of a pulse will be heard from the ultrasound machine, this is when blood flow is being assessed