

About pre-fistula scanning

What is a fistula?

Before starting your regular haemodialysis sessions, you need to have a site on your body where blood can be removed and returned during dialysis. An arterial venous fistula (AVF) is designed for this - it is created by connecting an artery directly to a vein, usually in the forearm. Connecting the artery to the vein causes more blood to flow into the vein. As a result, the vein grows larger and stronger, making repeated needle insertions easier.

Why do I need a scan before creating a fistula?

It is important to ensure that all the arteries and veins are intended to be used for your fistula are functioning adequately otherwise the fistula may fail.

Where do I go?

Vascular Studies, 6th floor - entrance next to 6 west A ward

Who will I see?

You will be seen by a member of the clinical vascular scientist team, who will perform and interpret your ultrasound scan.

How do I prepare for the test?

No preparation is required for the test. You will be asked to remove some of your clothing in order to expose your arm or leg for the scientist to perform the scan.

What does the test involve?

You lie on the couch, some cold gel is applied to your arm or leg and the scientist scans the area of interest using ultrasound to image the arteries and veins.

The test takes about 20-30 minutes. There are no risks or side-effects associated with this test.

What happens next?

The clinical vascular scientist writes a report of the scan result and informs the doctor who requested the scan. The clinical scientist can comment on the findings. You will be able to discuss the results more fully with the doctor at your next out-patient appointment.

Do you have any further questions?

Do not hesitate to contact vascular studies 020 7830 2862 and speak to one of our clinical vascular scientists.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please ask a member of staff. © Vascular Studies 2014 [Review date: March 2016]