

A Kidney Glossary

Kidney Terms and Their Meaning

Access: *A general term, which describes a site on the body where needles are inserted for hemodialysis.*

Acute Renal Failure: *When the kidneys suddenly stop working. Often the kidneys can recover and start working again.*

Albumin: *A blood protein that can indicate the amount of stored protein in the body. Albumin also helps maintain blood pressure and blood volume.*

Anemia: *A condition caused by too few red blood cells. A lack of red blood cells deprives organs of much needed oxygen. Symptoms include weakness, paleness, and shortness of breath, fatigue, and fuzzy thinking.*

Aranesp: *A medicine used to treat anemia by helping the bone marrow produce more red blood cells.*

BUN: *Blood Urea Nitrogen is a measure of wastes in the blood.*

CAPD: *Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis is a method of removing toxins and wastes from the blood. CAPD is done by instilling a special fluid into the abdomen through a tube. This process is done at home, four to five times each day.*

Catheter:

- *A temporary tube that is placed into a vein in the neck for hemodialysis.*
- OR
- *A tube surgically placed in the abdomen that is used for peritoneal dialysis.*

Epogen (EPO): *A medicine used to treat anemia by helping the bone marrow produce more red blood cells.*

Erythropoietin: A hormone produced by the kidneys that acts on the bone marrow to make red blood cells. Lack of the hormone may cause anemia.

Fistula: A surgical connection of an artery directly to a vein where needles are inserted for hemodialysis. A common site for a fistula is in the arm.

Graft: A synthetic surgically placed tube that connects an artery to a vein where needles are inserted for hemodialysis. A common site for a graft is in the arm.

Hemodialysis: Hemodialysis is a method of removing toxins and wastes from the blood. It is done by inserting needles into a graft, fistula or catheter to connect the patient to a machine. The blood travels through the machine where it is cleaned and returned back to the body through another needle and tubing. This process is done, at a unit, three times a week, four hours at a time.

High Blood Pressure: Also known as hypertension. This is a condition where the blood travels through blood vessels with more force than normal. Too much fluid and salt in the diet may make this condition worse. High blood pressure might cause damage to the heart, eyes or kidneys.

Kidneys: Two large, bean shaped organs located along each side of your spine just under your rib cage. These organs filter and remove waste products and fluid from the blood and make hormones that control blood pressure and make red blood cells.