



Getting Your Vascular Access Surgeons Involved

Vascular Access surgeons are key members of the dialysis care team - without them, the care of the patient would come to a screeching stop! Now, more than ever before, it is imperative that the surgeon be included in the individual care plan for the patient. Given the busy schedules and workloads that surgeons are faced with, how can dialysis centers and vascular access surgeons get together to discuss patient needs? Here are some suggestions!

- Know his/her schedule and approach him/her during the most convenient times.
- Cultivate your relationship. You both want the same things: patients that are healthy & happy with well functioning long-lasting vascular accesses!
- Try to use economy of steps: “Two birds with one stone” (i.e. One page/phone call with several issues.)
- Courtesy emails, notes, or fax reminders are a nice idea.
- Keep him/her “in-the-loop”. No one likes surprises.
- Invite him/her to attend the monthly facility CQI meetings. If that does not fit into their schedule, try to at least arrange a phone conversation between the Nephrologist and the surgeon to discuss patient access problems or permanent access plans.
- Always make your interactions as pleasant as possible.
- Serve food, coffee, etc. at meetings!
- Strive to have all of the facts at hand – and know beforehand the data that the surgeon wants and needs to know!
- Pay close attention to details.
- Invite the vascular access surgeon to lecture to your staff members at an upcoming staff meeting. Be sure to document the date, time, topic, and attendees. Show this to the State surveyor – they will love it!
- The vascular access surgeon is an amazing resource! Remember that!
- Don't waste their time – be organized.
- Do something nice for them.
- Get to know the names of his/her key staff members (i.e. scrub nurse, receptionist, etc.)
- Promote professionalism by demonstrating it yourself. Treat the surgeon the way that you want to be treated - in person and on the telephone.