When should I contact the Apheresis Unit?

Contact the apheresis doctor or nurse if:

- You have a fever.
- The catheter site is red, warm, painful or oozing fluid.
- You see blood on your bandage and the amount is getting bigger.
- The veins in your neck or chest bulge.
- You see that the catheter is getting shorter.
- You see the catheter fall out. Cover with a clean towel and put pressure on the site.
- You see a hole or a crack in your catheter. Clamp the catheter above the damage. Apheresis nurses will give you a clamp.
- The cap comes off. Clamp the catheter. Apheresis nurses will give you a clamp.
- You see blisters on your skin around the catheter.
- You have any questions or concerns about your catheter.

When should I seek immediate care?

Seek care immediately, or call 911 if:

- You have pain in your arm, neck, shoulder, or chest.
- The catheter site turns cold, changes color, or you cannot feel it.
- You have chest pain or trouble breathing that is getting worse over time.

If you have an urgent question or concern outside of business hours, please call the UC San Diego Medical Center (Hillcrest) operator at 619-543-6222 and ask to speak to the nephrology doctor on-call.

Apheresis Program
200 W. Arbor Drive,
San Diego, CA. 92103
Phone: 619-543-5977
Fax: 619-543-7367
Email: apheresis@ucsd.edu
Website: http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/apheresis/Pages/default.aspx

Business Hours:
Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 4.30pm
How can I prevent catheter (central line) associated infections?
A central line-associated bloodstream infection can be caused by bacteria getting into your blood. Infections from catheters can be a serious problem and can lead to severe illness.

- **Wash your hands:** Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub (62%) to clean your hands for 15 to 20 seconds. Clean your hands before and after you touch the catheter or the area around it.

- **Limit contact:** Try to avoid handling or touching your catheter unless you have been given detailed instruction by an apheresis nurse.

- **Maintain clean skin:** Dressings are changed by the apheresis nurse every week, or as needed.

- **Check for infection:** Check the area around your catheter every day for signs of infection, such as pain, fever, redness, swelling, oozing or warmth at the site. Contact the Apheresis Unit if you notice any of these signs.

- **Keep the area dry:** The catheter dressing should never get wet because this will increase the risk of infection. If you get the dressing slightly wet, dry the site immediately, by gently patting the dressing. If the dressing is completely wet and coming off, please call the Apheresis Unit for further instruction. You cannot go swimming, or be submerged underwater when you have an apheresis catheter.

  **Tip:** If you are taking a shower, ensure the catheter site (dressing and limbs) is completely covered. We recommend you cover the catheter site with a shower shield (available at local stores), or with clean plastic (Saran) wrap, and secure the edges with plastic tape (3M Transpore tape). Avoid getting the catheter site hit by the direct stream of water.

- **Avoid weight:** You should avoid carrying or lifting heavy weight anywhere near the site of your catheter. Examples include, carrying a heavy purse, or backpack on your shoulder (closest to the catheter) and lifting weights at the gym.

- **Limit arm movement:** If you have a catheter, you may need to limit certain sports such as tennis, or activities in which you have a lot of arm movement.