

KIDNEY DIALYSIS – WHAT TO EXPECT

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease

About 1 in 10 people have some degree of chronic kidney disease

Kidney dialysis is a procedure that has prolonged the lives of millions. Share this guide with your patients to help them understand what dialysis is, what to expect and how they can actively participate in their care.

01 | What is Dialysis?

Dialysis performs some of the functions typically done by healthy kidneys. When your kidneys are not functioning properly to keep you healthy, dialysis is necessary for the following reasons:

- To remove waste products, salt and extra water to prevent buildup in the body
- To help keep safe levels of certain chemicals in your blood
- To help control blood pressure
- To help red blood cell production to correct anemia

02 | What to Expect

Most often, dialysis is performed in a medical facility. Treatment can take up to four hours and a patient is usually required to receive three treatments each week. Therefore, the medical staff will work hard to make sure you are comfortable and relaxed during your sessions.

- **Preparation:** Vital signs are checked and the access site is cleansed. Blood pressure and heart rate may be checked throughout the treatment as well.
- **Treatment:** Two needles are inserted through the access site, secured and attached to flexible tubing that is connected to the dialyzer. One tube draws blood to the dialyzer to filter your blood a few ounces at a time, removing waste and extra fluid. The filtered blood returns to your body through the second tube.

- **Possible Side Effects:** You may experience nausea and abdominal cramping. If so, or if you're uncomfortable during the procedure, notify medical staff as adjustments may be needed to reduce side effects.
- **After the Session:** Once the dialysis unit is finished, the needles will be removed and a dressing will be applied to the access site. Weight may be recorded and then you will be released.
- **Post-Dialysis Fatigue:** Some patients experience generalized weakness, exercise intolerance and muscle atrophy as a result of dialysis treatments.

03 | Doing Your Part

Be sure to advise your dialysis team of any problems during or between treatments. Also, it is important to follow your medical provider's instructions on diet and nutrition, taking your medication as prescribed and not missing any dialysis sessions. Also, managing your stress levels and having a support system in place can be vital to your well-being. Each of these elements are key to the success of your dialysis treatments and improved health.

For additional information, please visit:
<https://www.kidney.org/>

Did You Know?
Approximately 45,000 people in the U.S. undergo kidney dialysis treatments

References

https://www.kidney.org/sites/default/files/docs/11-10-0307_dialysistransitionbk2_oct07_lr_bm.pdf
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/hemodialysis/basics/definition/prc-20015015>