

I. MY SUPPORT TEAM

YOU

You are the leader. You are the only one who knows you best, and the team depends on you!

NEPHROLOGIST (KIDNEY DOCTOR)

This is the go to person on your dialysis team. He or she prescribes your treatment, monitors your health, and adjusts needed changes to your treatments.

NURSE

Checks your health, your reaction to medications, supervises treatments, and provides education. Nurses take care of more than one patient at a time. Having patience and being respectful of their jobs will help make the best of the time they provide to you.

DIETITIAN

Helps you pick kidney friendly foods based on your current health, medical history, and blood test results. Making better food choices will help you feel more comfortable at dialysis treatments, and live an active healthier lifestyle.

SOCIAL WORKER

He / She can help you address concerns, and find community resources like financial aid and support to assist you in navigating your life with kidney disease. He/she can help you most if you are open and honest about how you feel.

TECHNICIAN

Under the supervision of the nurse, monitors your dialysis treatment and handles any other dialysis issues you may have.

PHARMACIST

They are experts on any medication related questions. You should inform the pharmacist about all of the medications, vitamins, food supplements, or herbal medicines you are taking, as these can have a bad reaction with other drugs.



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NAVIGATING THE DIALYSIS SYSTEM

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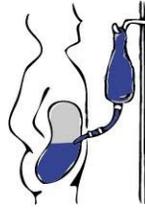
A Guide for Dialysis Patients

Made by Patients Like You...

II. MY TREATMENT

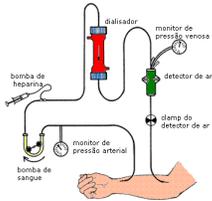
PERITONEAL DIALYSIS (PD)

Performed through a catheter it can be done almost anywhere by yourself. Food and fluid plans are more flexible. It is very important to avoid getting the catheter wet. It must be kept clean as you are exposed to higher risks of infections.



IN-CENTER HEMODIALYSIS

Treatment is done through a graft or fistula 3 times a week and lasts 3 to 4 hours. Longer is better as it will clean out your blood and help you feel better. You are on a very strict fluid and meal plan. Although it is time consuming you have 4 days of the week in which you do not dialyze.

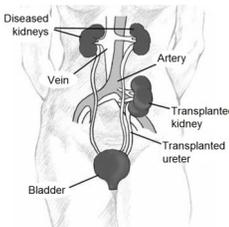


AT-HOME HEMODIALYSIS

You are in charge of your everyday care, and treatment times are flexible to your schedule. You must be responsible to follow the doctor's orders during all your treatments. If an emergency happens, you will have to keep calm and prepare ahead to deal with it.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

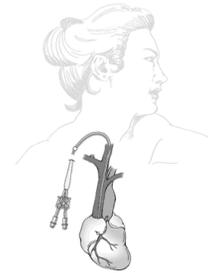
This is often viewed as the optimal form of treatment. If the new kidney works well you will not need dialysis, but you must keep taking medications every day to help your new kidney function. The drugs are costly and have side effects. You will have to drink lots of fluids to keep your new kidney healthy.



III. MY VASCULAR ACCESS

VENOUS CATHETER

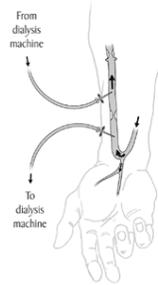
Is a plastic tube that is surgically placed on the chest, neck, or groin. One end of the tube connects to a primary vein, and the other end is outside of the skin used to dialyze. When diagnosed, depending on the progress of your kidney disease, this will be the ideal **temporary** access for Hemodialysis.



Once a vein mapping has been completed, and in collaboration with your vascular surgeon a permanent access is identified, **these are your choices:**

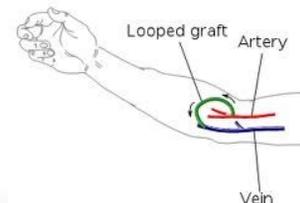
FISTULA

This is the ideal access method for dialysis as it is less likely to form clots, become infected, and lasts longest. Typically done in the forearm, your vascular surgeon will connect an artery to a vein causing more blood to flow through the vein and making it easily accessible for dialysis.



GRAFT

Unlike the fistula, the artery bridges to the vein by a piece of synthetic tubing. This access method may become infected or clotted, and develop holes after some time because of the needle punctures. For such reason these often need replacement somewhere between 1 to 3 years.



IV. MY RESOURCES

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE



1-800-503-6897

NeedyMeds is an information resource devoted to helping people in need find assistance programs to help them afford their medications.

1-800-772-1213

If you have Medicare and are having trouble paying for your prescriptions you should apply for "Extra Help" with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs through the **Social Security Administration**.
<http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/>



GENERAL SUPPORT

For other useful resources related to Kidney Disease, please speak with your Social Worker at the unit; they will help you navigate and connect to the right resources.

BECOME A PATIENT ADVOCATE!

Join a patient support group today!

Everyone has something valuable to offer. You can help other patients who are in need of guidance just like you once were!