



Quality Insights Renal Network 3

Serving New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands



Kidneys R Us

**From the
QIRN3 Patient Advisory
Committee**

What Happens to Me When I Miss Dialysis Treatments?

There are five stages of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). When a person enters Stage 5 CKD, they will need either dialysis or a kidney transplant to continue living. This fact is very difficult for most people to accept. If dialysis is the best form of treatment, adjustments have to be made to an individual's life that accommodate the dialysis schedule. If a person chooses hemodialysis, they will be required to have treatments at least three times a week for generally three to four hours. If they choose peritoneal dialysis (PD) they will need to treat daily. Each of these forms of dialysis takes time away from an individual's normal routine of daily living.

Some patients find this change in their routine very difficult to manage. They may decide to skip treatments as a means of maintaining their "normal" routine. This may happen because they are in denial and have not accepted their kidney failure. It can also be due to obligations (family, work, etc.) that make it difficult to

What Happens to Me When I Miss Dialysis Treatments? Cont.

stick to the dialysis routine. Either reason for choosing to miss dialysis treatments can have immediate and/or long-term negative consequences.

When a patient misses a hemodialysis treatment they will miss out on receiving the medications ordered by their physicians. Many patients receive intravenous (IV) medications to manage their anemia, bone mineral metabolism, and if needed, antibiotics for infection. When a patient misses a hemodialysis treatment, they miss these important medications that will provide immediate benefits as well as long-term benefits.

Hemodialysis patients will also retain fluid for longer periods of time when treatments are missed. This can result in shortness of breath from fluid in the lungs which also causes strain on the heart. Missed treatments mean less cleaning of the blood and higher potassium levels, which can lead to an irregular heartbeat and possible death.

Consider the hemodialysis patient who misses one treatment per week. That patient will miss 52 treatments in a year. It is the same as missing four months of treatment! This patient will be at a much higher risk of complications resulting in hospitalizations, and even death. For the patient who misses one treatment a month, he/she will miss 12 treatments a year or one month of treatments.

What Happens to Me When I Miss Dialysis Treatments? Cont.

Adjusting to dialysis is a difficult process that is unique to each individual. Some patients struggle more than others to make a positive adjustment. It is important that each individual get the help they need to make a positive adjustment. Reach out to your dialysis team to receive the support and encouragement you need to adjust positively.

Why Do the Changes to My Body Bother Me So Much?

Body changes that occur as a result of being a dialysis or kidney transplant patient can be very upsetting. As individuals, everyone has an idea of how they like their body to look. For men, the image is often of a strong, muscular man. For women, the image can be of smooth skin and a nice figure. Sometimes there are changes brought on by kidney disease that can make it difficult for an individual to maintain that idea. This can be very bothersome.

Medications can have side-effects that change a person's skin tone or cause breakouts. Hemodialysis patients need to have a vascular access placed which can effect their bodies in a way they do not like. Peritoneal dialysis patients will need to have a catheter placed in their abdomen, and that can have the same effect.

Why Do the Changes to My Body Bother Me So Much? Cont.

Weight loss or gain are also side effects of dialysis and transplant that can be bothersome to many patients. First, patients need to remember that these changes are a part of the disease. It is not a reflection on the personal care of their body. Second, patients need to have someone to talk with about these changes and the impact they have on their body image. These two suggestions can help a patient deal with the emotions brought on by the changes.

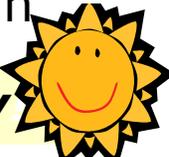
Patients can also make adjustments in their routine that can help with the changes to their bodies. Exercise is an important tool to help with weight gain. Walking is an excellent option. Clothing choices can also help a patient deal with the catheter or fistula/graft that he/she may not like to expose to others. Good hygiene and the use of lotions or colognes can help a patient feel more attractive. A new haircut or style can boost an individual's moral. A manicure or pedicure can have the same effect. What's most important is that you feel good about yourself, as you are!

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Patient Learning and Action Network

We invite you to join our patient committee, and share your very unique ideas and experiences. Overseen by Quality Insights Renal Network 3, the Patient and Family Focused Learning and Action Network (LAN) has been designed to provide patients, and their family members, with an opportunity to influence the future of the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) community. The LAN members, also known as Subject Matter Experts (SME), will share a voice beyond that of their own, as they will be leaders within the renal community. Everyone has unique ideas, even though we sometimes do not think so. I invite you to join our LAN and share those ideas with us. You'll see how you too can make a difference. Come and be a part of the action! Meetings are held as toll-free conference calls. Please call 1-888-877-8400 to join the LAN.

JOIN the PAC Today



The Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) for QIRN3 consists of dialysis patients and those who have received transplants. The committee meets quarterly to discuss issues relevant to ESRD patients. The PAC members have a genuine concern for quality of care issues and encourage patients to be involved in their healthcare. They are willing to share skills and experience with others. Each facility is encouraged to have a PAC representative. Talk to your social worker to volunteer!

Call toll free 1-888-877-8400 to join the PAC.

**To file a Grievance
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