Getting Knowledge About Kidney Disease

Have you been told that you have late stage kidney disease?

Choose Your Lifestyle On Dialysis
There are two kinds of dialysis. Dialysis can be done in the daytime or overnight. 30% of Australians are on home dialysis. More dialysis means that it is easier to control diet and fluid.

Take Control
It is your body and you have the right to choose. Having knowledge helps you take control. Taking control can lead to the best choices for you. The best time for getting knowledge about treatment is six months before you start.

Your kidney disease may be here to stay but support will make your journey easier.

Have A Smooth Start On Treatment
Getting knowledge means better results from treatment. You get to start dialysis before you get too sick. You are likely to spend less time in hospital with more knowledge. You will feel less stressed. Getting knowledge means you may have earlier transplants.

Explore Supportive Care - If Dialysis Is Not For You
Some people, especially very old or sick people choose supportive care (not to have dialysis). You may not live as long but you may enjoy the rest of your life more. Doctors continue to keep a check on your health with medications and diet.

Manage Your Kidney Disease And Slow The Damage
Blood pressure, high blood sugar and smoking all damage your kidneys. Take blood pressure tablets to keep your blood pressure down. Keep your blood sugar in a healthy range. Avoid smoking. Eat a healthy diet and drink water. Aim for a healthy weight- take regular exercise. Attend regular check ups at your health clinics.
Healthy Kidneys
You have two kidneys. They filter and clean your blood. Waste leaves your body in your urine.

Blood Sugar
If you have diabetes check your blood sugar regularly. Aim for the level set by your specialist, nurse or doctor. Remember to take your diabetes medicine.

Chronic Kidney Disease
This means your kidneys are sick. Diabetes and high blood pressure are two common causes.

Blood Pressure
Keep your blood pressure down below 140/90.
You must take your blood pressure tablets every day.

Keeping Healthy
Physical activity and healthy eating improves the health of your kidneys and your heart.
Aim to be active every day in as many ways as you can.
Talk to your clinic about the right diet for you.

Slowing the Damage
Follow your doctor’s or clinic’s advice about monitoring and managing your health to slow the damage. Smoking also damages your kidneys. Talk to your clinic to help you quit.
Get treatment for skin infections, sore feet and bad teeth.
You need to see your doctor at least once a year for a kidney health check.
Haemodialysis

Haemodialysis will need to become part of your routine. When you are off dialysis you can continue your normal daily life. If you travel for any reason you need to book into another dialysis clinic.

**Machine**
Haemodialysis uses a machine.

**Filter**
The filter (dialyser) cleans the blood.

**Frequency**
You need 3 treatments each week to keep yourself from being sick.

**Cleaning the Blood**
You will be on dialysis for four to six hours to have the waste and extra water cleaned from your blood.

**Access**
A special access (fistula) is needed for the two needles. An operation is done to join your vein and artery which makes the vein bigger.

This is called a fistula.

Each treatment 2 needles are put into your fistula. The needles are removed at the end of treatment.

**Dialysis Fluid**
The dialysis fluid is made from specially treated tap water. When it has been used, it goes down the drain taking the waste and water with it.
Lifestyle Advantages
Home haemodialysis allows you more flexibility and control. It is easier to work, care for children, go hunting and fishing and do the things you like to do. You can do extra hours which will clean your blood more.

Training
Training time vary between three and five months, three or four times per week.

Support and Visits
Once at home you always have a nurse to support you. They may visit you and can have varying phone availability in different areas on the hot line phone.

Dialysis Routine
At home you choose your own times for dialysis, to fit in with what you do.

You must still do your dialysis at least 3 times a week.

Frequency of Dialysis
To give you the best possible health you can choose to dialyse extra days or five to six nights a week. This means you have less food and fluid restrictions. You may also need less tablets.

Equipment and Location
All the equipment you need for home haemodialysis is provided free of charge. If you cannot have a machine at home, you may be able to have your machine at a local clinic. Special plumbing and electricity are needed. Your clinic can provide more information.
Centre-based dialysis is usually a regular and fixed routine. Most centres can offer morning or afternoon appointments, six days a week. Centre-based dialysis is for those who cannot or choose not to dialyse at home.

**Dialysis Centre Locations**
Dialysis centres are in the community, or attached to hospitals.

Dialysis centres are not available in every community. You may have to move from your community to get dialysis or choose home dialysis.

**Transport to Dialysis**
Some communities provide a bus to take you to and from dialysis or you may have to use your own transport. Information is available from your renal unit or Kidney Health Australia.

**Nurses Support**
Nurses are there to support you with your dialysis.

**Dialysis Routine**
The routine is usually three times a week for four to five hours plus travel time. You must be on time.

**Diet and Fluids**
You will usually need to restrict your fluid, salt and potassium. Try to eat healthy foods. A dietitian or a dialysis nurse can help with your diet and fluid choices.
Peritoneal dialysis gives you lots of freedom to continue your life as you choose. You stay at home in your community. You can work, carry on with hobbies, study, play sport, go shopping and care for children. You will be able to travel around to most places but first you must plan to take your bags and tell your clinic staff.

**Operation**
First you have a small operation to get a tube put in your belly. The same tube is used for the two types of peritoneal dialysis.

**All peritoneal dialysis cleans your blood gently every day**

**Diet and Fluids**
There are less food or drink restrictions compared to clinic haemodialysis.

1. **The Daytime Bags**
CAPD requires four bag (fluid) exchanges every day. Each bag change takes about 45 minutes.

2. **Overnight Machine**
APD uses a machine to do the fluid exchanges for eight to ten hours, overnight while you sleep. The machine takes about 30 minutes to set up before you go to bed.
The Fluid (Bag) Change

1. Wash your hands and set up. Then **hook up** your tube to a new bag of dialysis fluid.

2. Open the clamp and **drain out** the old fluid.

3. Flush, then **drain in** the new fluid.

4. Finally you **unhook** your tube.

The fluid (dialysate) cleans your blood whilst you carry on with your day.

With the **APD machine**, it is set up for many fluid exchanges overnight. You hook up when you go to bed and unhook when you wake up.

**Delivery of Supplies**
All equipment is delivered to you every month **free** of charge. You need an undercover area to store this. Remote areas may need extra supplies for the wet season.

**Training Time**
You spend about 1-2 weeks visiting a **training clinic** to learn to change the bags and learn all skills to manage your peritoneal dialysis. You can take a support person with you to train.

**Home Support**
When you go home **nurses** will visit your home to support you, or they are only a phone-call away.

**Hygiene and Health**
Hand washing is very important to stop infections. You must also do your dialysis as taught every day.
Kidney transplant is one form of treatment for kidney disease. You must be very healthy to receive a kidney. Follow your doctors advice about dialysis and taking medicine. Kidneys are donated by either a donor who has passed away or a living family member or friend.

Medical Tests
Before the transplant you will need many tests, known as ‘the work-up’.

Waiting List
Most kidneys are received from a donor who has passed away. There is a long waiting list to receive a kidney.

Transplant Hospitals
Only large hospitals can do transplant operations.

Surgery
After the transplant surgery you will be in hospital for about a week.

You will need to stay close to the hospital for up to three months if you live out of town.

The transplant kidney may start working immediately but some take a little longer.

A working kidney transplant will keep you off dialysis but you must keep to a healthy lifestyle with good food, exercise and no smoking.

Medicine
You must take medicine for the life of your transplanted kidney.

Doctors Visits
You will need very regular check-ups with your doctor.
If you have kidney failure you can decide to let nature take its course. You should discuss your choices with your nurse or doctor. Your life may be shorter, but your quality of life may be better.

**Conservative Management**

**Supportive Care or Non-Dialysis**

Simple Treatment
Choosing conservative or supportive care means you are not having dialysis or a kidney transplant. Some people choose this option after a time on dialysis, or they may choose not to...

Advance Care Planning
This is the time to plan your priorities at this important stage of life. You can appoint a guardian, plan your future care and choose where you want to be when the time comes for you to finish up.

Health Check-ups
You will visit your local doctor, nurse or kidney specialist regularly for check-ups. You may also be referred to the palliative care team for specialised symptom control and home support.

Medications
You are likely to take the same medicine as those who choose dialysis. These will help make you feel better but cannot fix your kidneys.

No Dialysis
To help you feel better you may have to restrict certain foods and drinks.

No Transplant

Finishing Up
As your kidneys get sicker you may get short of breath, feel itchy and get swelling in your legs or face. Diet and medications only help for a time. When it is time to ‘finish up’ you start to get confused and then you fall asleep.