

Kidney Health (Hemodialysis) Self-Management Plan

EVERY DAY:

- Try not to gain more than 5 pounds between dialysis treatments.
- Limiting salt and fluid intake helps prevent gain of “fluid weight.” You can do this by avoiding processed foods and limiting fluid intake to under a liter (34 ounces) daily.
- Take your phosphate binders with meals to help keep your bones strong. High phosphate weakens your bones.
- Eat plenty of protein: meat, eggs, poultry, fish, soy.
- Take your medications.

ALSO:

- Don't miss or shorten dialysis treatments.
- Keep all your medical appointments.
- Schedule a meeting with your kidney center dietician; they are available to help you with meal planning.

Green Flags—All Clear



If you have:

- No shortness of breath
- No chest pain
- No swelling of feet, ankles, legs, hands, or face
- Gained less than 5 pounds between treatments
- Your usual tolerance for daily activities

What this means ...

- You are doing well!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags—Caution



If you have:

- Weight gain of more than 5 pounds between dialysis treatments
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing when lying down, or you need to sleep sitting up with extra pillows
- Swelling of your feet, ankles, legs, hands, face
- Difficulty performing your usual activities
- Fever, chills, cough, or body aches
- No buzzing (thrill) in your fistula or graft
- Painful, hot, red or swollen skin around your fistula or graft
- Diarrhea more than 3 times a day, or are vomiting more than once a day
- Any symptoms affecting your ability to attend your dialysis treatment

What this means ...

- You need to be checked by a healthcare provider.
- You may have too much fluid, have an infection, or need your fistula or graft checked.

Call your doctor, your dialysis center, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think



If you have:

- Bleeding from your fistula or graft that doesn't stop after holding firm pressure
- Severe shortness of breath
- Fast heartbeat
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Chest pain or heaviness in your chest
- Severe muscle weakness
- Trouble walking or talking

What this means ...

- You need to be checked by a healthcare provider.
- You may have too much fluid, have an infection, or need your fistula or graft checked.

If possible, notify your health care provider's office and dialysis center.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!

Kidney Health Fast Facts

- Your kidneys play several important roles. They keep fluid and minerals in balance and eliminate waste and extra fluid from the body.
- People with kidney failure may develop symptoms of fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, weakness, swelling, difficulty breathing or difficulty thinking due to the buildup of waste or extra fluid.
- Dialysis is a medical treatment for people with kidney failure that **replaces** but does not restore kidney function. Dialysis can be done in a hospital, dialysis center, or home. You and your doctor will decide which type of dialysis and place is best, based on your medical condition and your wishes.
- Dialysis replaces many of the functions healthy kidneys perform, including:
 - removing waste and extra fluids from your blood
 - keeping electrolytes and minerals in your blood, such as potassium, sodium, calcium, and bicarbonate, in balance
 - helping to regulate your blood pressure.
- Types of dialysis:
 - **Hemodialysis** is a treatment where your blood passes through a dialysis machine with a special filter (dialyzer) that 1) removes waste and extra fluid from your blood, and 2) balances the electrolytes and minerals in your blood. Before starting dialysis, a minor surgery is needed to create a special blood vessel—an *arteriovenous fistula* (AVF) or an *arteriovenous graft* (AVG)—usually in the arm, that is used to transfer blood from your body to the dialysis machine, and back to your body.
 - **Peritoneal dialysis** uses the lining of your abdomen or belly (the *peritoneum*) as a filter. Before starting peritoneal dialysis, surgery is performed to place a catheter or tube in your abdomen that has a connection outside of your body, usually near your belly button. The outside portion of the tube is used to fill your belly with a special cleaning fluid called *dialysate*. As the fluid sits in your belly, waste products move from your blood vessels to the fluid. The fluid is then removed from your belly, using the same tube. Most people on peritoneal dialysis do treatments at home while they sleep. The tube is connected to a machine that cycles the dialysate in and out of the abdomen.

What can you do?

- Complete your dialysis treatments according to your prescribed schedule.
- Follow the customized healthy eating plan recommended by your kidney dietitian.
- Stay as physically active as possible to maintain and improve your strength and heart health.
- Talk with your dialysis provider and pharmacist about any medications, supplements, or herbal products you are taking or are considering starting.
- Talk with your dialysis team about any concerns or side effects that you may have.
- Talk with your health care provider if your blood pressure is out of the range recommended by your provider.

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County—plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County. For information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org.



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