NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION®

Getting your household ready for home dialysis

Deciding to do home dialysis is a big decision. If you decide to do home dialysis, you will set up a "mini dialysis center" in your home. This can take up space and affect others who live with you.

You will need to let your household members know about your decision, what it means for the household, and how it might affect them. This discussion guide will help you have these conversations.

These conversations can let your household members know what you are going through so they can understand and support you.

Your healthcare team may recommend or even require you to have a care partner to help with your treatments. Your care partner may or may not live with you. If they don't live with you, you can still include them in these conversations.

TIPS

Here are some tips to have good, meaningful conversations:

- **Be prepared** – think about what you want to say before the conversations. You may even want to practice by talking to yourself in a mirror!
- **Be open and honest** about your feelings and needs.
- **Use active listening** – listen and focus on what the other person is saying, not on what you will say next.

Remember: This is not a onetime conversation! Keep open and honest communication as you and your household get used to home dialysis.

Talk before you decide to do home dialysis

Deciding to do home dialysis is an important decision. Let your household members (which may be your family, friends, or roommates) know this is something you are thinking about.

You can talk with your household about:

- What home dialysis is
- Why you want to do it
- What it involves
- What they might need to do, if anything
- How much space will be needed

Talk about your decision

If you decide to do home dialysis, talk with your household members about your choice. Your choice will likely affect them, so you want to make sure they are prepared.

You can talk with your household about:

- Why you are choosing to do home dialysis
- What your treatments will involve and how often you will do them
- How they can help you before, during, or after your treatments
- Any questions or concerns they may have

Talk about your treatment schedule

Your treatment schedule may change your household members' schedules or usual activities. For example, if you have a night-time treatment at 7:30 pm, but your family usually eats dinner then, you may have to have dinner earlier or later.

Your schedule will also likely change your care partner's schedule, responsibilities or usual activities. They may have to stop or not do something to help you with your treatments. They will need to know your schedule so they can make changes to their own.

You can talk with your household and care partner about:

- Your treatment schedule and how flexible it may or may not be
- If anyone else's usual schedule or activities will need to change
- How to make any schedule changes as smooth as possible

Talk about where you will do your treatments and store supplies

You will need a space or room where you will do your treatments and store supplies. This will include:

- Your machine (if you are doing home hemodialysis or continuous cycling peritoneal dialysis (CCPD))
- Where you will sit or rest during your treatment
- Where you store your supplies

Making this space may mean moving other people's belongings to make room. Often there are creative ways to store supplies to impact others as little as possible. It helps to recognize and thank people for the changes they make for you.

You can talk with your household about:

- Where you would like to make a comfortable treatment space
- Where you can store your supplies
- If you need to move other people's things or declutter to make space, and if so, who will do this

Talk about cleanliness

It is important to keep your treatment and supply spaces clean enough to avoid infections.

The area does not have to be spotless but is worth talking about with those you live with that the area should be tidy.

You can talk with your household about:

- Why it's important to keep your treatment and supply spaces tidy.
- Who will keep the spaces tidy.
- How to keep your treatment area pet-free, if there are pets in your household.
- How to use good hand hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitizer).
    - » You and your care partner will need to have good hand hygiene while you do your treatments.
    - » You may want others in your house to have good hand hygiene if they touch or move things in your treatment space.

Talk about extra waste, electricity, and water

Your dialysis treatment may cause your household to use more electricity or water than normal. Your dialysis supplies will create more waste such as cardboard boxes, plastic wrapping, and used supplies.

You can talk with your household about:

- Why your treatment will use more electricity and water
- Who will pay for the electricity and water bills, if they go up
- Who will clean the extra waste out of your home
- If you recycle, talk about what can and cannot be recycled
- How to correctly throw away certain used supplies. Make sure everyone knows:
    - » Used needles or syringes should go into a sharps container. You then take this to a special disposal location such as a pharmacy or your doctor's office – do not throw these away in your trash.
    - » If you do peritoneal dialysis (PD), used PD fluid should be flushed down the toilet, a bathroom or utility sink, shower/ tub drain. Nurses will advise how often to bleach your drains.

Talk about where they can find more information

Your household members may want to learn more about home dialysis and how they can support you.

Let your household know they can:

- Contact your home dialysis nurse from your dialysis center. You can call them at any time (someone is available even after hours) for immediate or non-emergency help.
- Contact a social worker at your dialysis center to learn other ways they can support you.
- Learn more about kidney disease and home dialysis online at ***kidney.org/home-dialysis***
- Join an online support community at ***kidney.org/treatment-support/communities***

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: 855.NKF.CARES or email: nkfcares@kidney.org

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