

Helpful Hints For Starting In-Center Hemodialysis

Renal Specialists of Houston, PA

If you are reading this, it means that one of us has told you that it is time to start dialysis. We know that you may be nervous, and so this newsletter gives you some ideas to help you as you begin your dialysis treatments...

Wear comfortable clothing. If you have a fistula or graft in your arm, make certain any sleeves can be rolled up. If you have a dialysis catheter in your chest, a shirt that buttons in the front works best.

Bring a washable blanket with you. You typically feel cool on dialysis, and some patients will even bring hats, gloves, or sweaters. The chairs are vinyl recliners, and so you may want to bring a pillow as well as a sheet to cover the seat.

Bring your personal documents on the first day, such as your insurance card, driver's license, living will, or durable power of attorney.

Bring all your medications with you on the first day, and show them to your dialysis nurse. He or she will record these medications in your dialysis chart. It is very important that your dialysis team is aware of any medicine you are taking, since these may affect your treatments.

You may want to bring a snack. You are free to eat in the patient waiting areas before or after your dialysis, and snack machines are also available. Dialysis centers typically advise against eating during your treatments.

Friends or family members are welcome to come with you. For safety reasons, they cannot stay with you during the entire dialysis treatment. They can, however, stay in the waiting room and visit you periodically while you are on the machine.

You will have a television to watch, or you can bring books, music, or even your own DVD player. Depending on the dialysis center, you can also bring a laptop. The only restriction is that you do not disturb the other patients!

Arrive 30-60 minutes early on the first treatment day, so that you will have time to complete paperwork. These are legally required before the dialysis clinic can treat you.

DuJour



I'm not sure if
I'm coming or going...

Your relationship with us will also change. If you are going to a dialysis center where Renal Specialists of Houston are your doctors, you will typically see us *more often* than when you came to our office...

(You may be starting dialysis at a center where you will have a new kidney doctor who is not part of Renal Specialists. If this is the case, you will no longer be seen or followed by us. The exception is if you are hospitalized or awaiting kidney transplantation at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.)

The kidney doctor will see you at the dialysis center, at least monthly and typically weekly. Office appointments are no longer needed, unless you and/or your doctor determine a special need.

All kidney blood tests will be drawn at the dialysis center, with the blood typically taken from your dialysis "lines." Your doctors will discuss your lab results during their visits with you.

Ask your kidney doctor for any needed prescriptions or refills when he/she is seeing you at the dialysis center. The nurses there may also call in refills, as directed by the doctor.

Ask your kidney doctor what medicines you can stop taking! For instance, if you have been taking Aranesp or Procrit, the dialysis center will now administer it to you instead.

We continue to be your transplant doctor if you are awaiting renal transplantation at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, even if you are being dialyzed by another kidney doctor.

Your active medical chart will be kept at the dialysis center, so any questions or issues you have are best addressed to the dialysis center first. Please do not hesitate to call the office, however, if your needs are not met.

**We wish you the very best as
you start dialysis!**
