

STARTING IN-CENTER HEMODIALYSIS

If you are reading this, it means that you or a family member may have been told that it is time to start dialysis. We know that you might be anxious, so we hope that the following helps you as you begin your dialysis treatments.

Wear comfortable clothing. If you have a fistula or graft in your arm, make certain that your sleeves can be rolled up.

Bring a washable blanket with you. You will typically feel cool during dialysis. Some patients even wear hats and gloves. The chairs are vinyl recliners, so you may want to bring a sheet and a pillow.

Bring your medications. The dialysis nurse will record these medications in your electronic health record. It is very important that your dialysis team is aware of any medications that you are taking, since these may affect your dialysis.

You may want to bring a snack. Snack machines are also available at the centers. You are free to eat in the patient waiting areas before or after dialysis, but your center may restrict eating during dialysis treatments.

You will have a television to watch. Each dialysis chair has its own television. You may bring a book, laptop, cell phone or other electronic devices. Wi-Fi is typically available. The only restriction is that you do not disturb other patients.

Friends and family are welcome. For safety reasons, they cannot stay with you during the entire dialysis treatment. Then can, however, stay in the waiting area and visit you periodically while you are on the machine.

When you arrive, the first thing you will do is weigh. This will help the dialysis staff determine how much fluid needs to be removed.

After you weigh, remember to wash. You will be asked to thoroughly wash your hands and access site (if it is a fistula or graft) before the nurse takes you to the dialysis chair. This is essential to avoid infections.

A dialysis nurse or technician will take care of you. They will have already set up your dialysis machine and will take you to your chair. After measuring your blood pressure, they will insert needles into your fistula or graft, tubing will then be connected from the machine, and dialysis will start.

Talk to your dialysis team. Don't hesitate to ask questions. Always let your technician/nurse know how you are feeling. In other words, communication is the key!