

# Welcome to Hemodialysis



You have made the decision to start in-center hemodialysis to treat your kidney disease. You have probably had to make many decisions lately and may be a little nervous. We hope we can help you understand a little bit more about hemodialysis. We are at your service and want to help you make this the best experience it can be.



***The two main functions of healthy kidneys*** are to remove fluid and clean the blood. The artificial kidney that is used during dialysis can do some of that for you.

- While on dialysis, we can give you medications to replace those things that your kidneys are no longer making.
- Dialysis does only a fraction of what your healthy kidneys did, so never skip or shorten a treatment.
- It may take weeks to start feeling better as your kidneys have not been working for a while.
- There are other options besides hemodialysis for kidney failure.

***While receiving dialysis in our clinic you will:***

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Be sitting in the recliner for the entire treatment.
- Be cared for by staff who are also caring for other patients around you.

***Before treatment, you will:***

- Be weighed.
- Wash your access.
- Have your blood pressure taken.
- Be assessed by a nurse.
- Have needles inserted.
- Have labs drawn as needed.
- Go through safety checks.



*During treatment:*

- The dietitian, social worker, or your physician may talk with you.
- The staff will check on you at least every 30 minutes.
- You may receive medications.

*When your treatment is complete you:*

- May have blood samples drawn.
- Will have your blood pressure checked.
- Will have your needles removed.
- Will be assessed again by the nurse.
- Will be weighed again.

*Here is what some of the staff can do for you:*

**Nurses (RN, LPN)**

- Provide direct patient care
- Communicate with your physicians
- Treat your symptoms
- Administer medications

**Certified Patient Care Technicians (PCT, CHT)**

- Perform machine set up and safety checks
- Monitor your vital signs and notify the nurses when something changes
- Start and stop dialysis treatments

**Social Worker (MSW)**

- Specializes in needs such as financial, family, transportation, insurance questions and options, counseling and mental health resources
- Helps you set and achieve goals

**Registered Dietitian (RD)**

- Reviews your lab work
- Discusses healthy eating choices
- Provides you with resources for supplements and education

**Physicians (MD)**

- Your kidney doctor is responsible for directing your dialysis care and making rounds in the clinic to see you regularly.

**Please let the staff know if:**

- You feel bad before, during, or after dialysis.
- You had any medical treatment since your last dialysis.
- You start or stop any new medications.
- You feel like your medications are causing side effects.
- You receive calls or letters about your current insurance, or have questions about insurance or supplements.
- You or a family member changes jobs, or start or stop working.
- You think you might be interested in kidney transplant or home dialysis.
- You are thinking about stopping dialysis.

*Notify a staff person if you start experiencing any of the following:*

- |                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Tingling</b>  | <b>Nausea / Vomiting</b>         |
| <b>Back Pain</b> | <b>Any body aches</b>            |
| <b>Headache</b>  | <b>Light headedness</b>          |
| <b>Bleeding</b>  | <b>Funny taste in your mouth</b> |
| <b>Cramping</b>  | <b>Chest pain</b>                |
| <b>Sweating</b>  | <b>Shortness of breath</b>       |

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[www.ReachKidneyCare.org](http://www.ReachKidneyCare.org)

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