About home hemodialysis

Information brochure about having hemodialysis at home

Many different treatment options are available for living with kidney disease. These include a kidney transplant, hemodialysis, and peritoneal dialysis.

This brochure discusses ***hemodialysis at home***

Home Hemodialysis
This booklet gives you and your family more information about ***hemodialysis at home***. The brochure provides some information about what home hemodialysis is, the training and requirements for home hemodialysis, and what you need to know to have a kidney machine in your house.

What is home hemodialysis?
Home hemodialysis has been offered to kidney patients and their families in some parts of the world for many years. A kidney machine can be provided to patients who wish to perform their own hemodialysis at home.
Home hemodialysis offers greater flexibility and independence when having hemodialysis treatment. You, your husband or wife, a family member, or a friend, can be trained to perform hemodialysis in the comfort of your own home. The freedom of dialysis at home allows you to schedule your own treatment time, and be actively involved in all aspects of your dialysis care. *It gives you independence and flexibility in a safe environment.*

Goals of our Home Hemodialysis Program
The program can:
- provide you and your family with information about home hemodialysis
- train you and your dialysis partner in hemodialysis so that you can achieve skills you need to go home safely on hemodialysis
- give you the chance to perform your hemodialysis at home in a familiar environment
- provide all technical support for your kidney machine
- support you and your dialysis partner while on hemodialysing at home, with regular phone contact, home visits and follow-up care by nurses and technicians

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Your goals on completing our training program will be:
- confidence and active involvement in all aspects of your care
- safely performing hemodialysis at home with your dialysis partner
- a good understanding of hemodialysis
- ongoing regular scheduled doctor's appointments at the dialysis clinic
- good hemodialysis skills by ongoing contact with nursing staff and technicians in your home and at the dialysis clinic
- ongoing involvement with nurses, technicians, and water treatment personnel into your home for regular visits and equipment maintenance

Staff of the Home Dialysis Program will ensure you have a high quality dialysis at home.

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Going home on hemodialysis
We arrange transport of the kidney machine and the first batch of supplies before your first hemodialysis treatment at home.

Machine
A hemodialysis technician comes to your home to set up the kidney machine for the first time. They make sure that the kidney machine is working properly when you start dialysis at home.

Supplies
During hemodialysis training, you will learn how to order your own supplies. Some supplies can be delivered to you, while others will need to be picked up at the dialysis unit.

Electrical Alterations
The water treatment equipment and kidney machine require standard power and dedicated outlets. The hemodialysis technicians will fix all that is needed for your home.

Problems at home
During hemodialysis training, you will learn ways to solve some common dialysis-related problems. Support will always be available to you at home by calling the Home Hemodialysis team.
Regular routine maintenance is performed on the kidney machine. You will have a dialysis technician who services the kidney machine regularly or whenever a technical problem arises. For water and machine problems, you can call the technician for assistance.

Space requirements
It is a good idea to choose a room in your house that is large enough to put the kidney machine and supplies. Remember you will be spending approximately 6 to 8 hours per treatment in this room.
Space is needed for equipment, supplies, and water treatment, but small machines are available.
Treatment room – 3 metres by 3 metres, this room needs to be big enough for the kidney machine, chair and supply table. You will need to have enough space in the room for other people to be with you.
Supply room – 1.2 metres by 1.2 metres by 1 metre (length, width, height) for about 3 months' worth of supplies at any one time. A storage shelf works well to store these supplies.

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Cost for Hemodialysis
There is no charge to you for the kidney machine and supplies. You will notice an increase in your electricity and gas bills. All electrical and water treatment contractor costs will be covered by your home dialysis provider.

Benefits of Home Hemodialysis
- independence in your hemodialysis treatment
- increased satisfaction because you are involved in your care
- decreased travel time as treatments are performed at home
- flexible treatment schedule to fit your lifestyle
- better knowledge and understanding of your disease and health because of a dedicated training program
- the opportunity for your family to be more involved in your care
- more flexible diet
- less medication

Facts about Home Hemodialysis
There are many factors to consider when thinking about home hemodialysis:
Age
There is no age restriction. People on home hemodialysis must be willing to learn the hemodialysis procedures. You and your dialysis partner must be able to perform hemodialysis at the end of your training.
Dialysis Partner
Any time you perform hemodialysis at home, you need your trained hemodialysis partner to help you. This person who helps you can be a family member, your husband or wife, or a friend. They need to be committed to helping you with every hemodialysis treatment that you perform at home. This person must take part in the training program with you, so that they are confident in helping you with your treatment.
Health
Your doctor will confirm that you are suitable for home hemodialysis before you start training.

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Standards of Care
In order to enjoy the freedoms of home hemodialysis, patients are expected to comply with standards of care.
- you and your dialysis partner will need to maintain your good hemodialysis skills
- your dialysis partner will need to be present during your hemodialysis treatments
- you will need to have monthly blood tests
- you will need to attend regular clinic visits
- you will need to perform hemodialysis treatments as suggested by your kidney doctor

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Hemodialysis Access
You will need to have a good blood supply from your fistula or graft or permanent venous catheter before you can go home on hemodialysis. You and your dialysis partner will be taught how to needle your fistula or graft. If you have a central venous catheter, you will learn how to connect to the machine blood supply.

Home Training
Before starting home hemodialysis, you and your dialysis partner will need to attend the training program. Home hemodialysis nurses provide the training. The training generally lasts between 2 and 12 weeks and occurs during your regular dialysis treatment, 3 times per week. The training focuses on your hemodialysis skills for both you and your dialysis partner. ***You will not need to go home to do home hemodialysis until you are comfortable.***

Your Home
Most homes are suitable to have a kidney machine installed. A technician and/or a nurse will come to assess your space for hemodialysis.

Educating you and your family about home hemodialysis
An education session about home hemodialysis will be offered before you choose home hemodialysis. A kidney doctor, nurse, and social worker will be available to discuss home hemodialysis in more detail and answer any questions you have.

Home Requirements
Hemodialysis at home requires the installation of special equipment. We will:
- visit your home
- help you choose a suitable location for the kidney machine
- take a water sample for analysis
- make sure all is ready for you to start

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"…the flexibility of home hemodialysis is just so huge; it's the nearest thing to normality"

"I believe this is the best treatment, you feel the best on it"

"So I continue to use the machine at home and I'm working full time."

"…Less travel to [city] 3 times a week. I work 4 days a week."

Real patient quotes from a scientific article in the American Journal of Kidney Diseases by Rachael Morton and others, Volume 55, No 3 (March), 2010: pages 431-440.