

My Treatment: Am I Getting Enough Dialysis?

When kidneys work normally they filter blood all the time, but dialysis only filters a portion of what a healthy kidney does. When you started dialysis, part of your kidneys may have still been working. Your kidneys were able to remove some toxins and fluid. Unfortunately, this decreases over time and can impact whether or not you are getting enough dialysis treatment. Adequate dialysis means you are getting satisfactory and desirable Hemodialysis or Peritoneal dialysis. The goal of this page is to share what adequacy means to you, ways you can improve your adequacy, and the impact of inadequate dialysis on your quality of life.



How is Adequacy Calculated?

Several blood tests are used to determine if you are getting adequate dialysis. URR (Urea Reduction Ratio) is determined by the amount of urea (waste product) removed during dialysis. This value is obtained through a blood test known as BUN (Blood Urea Nitrogen), measures the concentration at the start of a dialysis treatment and again at the end of the same treatment. The calculation provides the percentage of BUN reduction giving the URR results. The URR should be 65% or greater. KT/V is another form of measurement for adequacy with a more complicated formula using the lab values as well as time dialyzed and fluid volume removed. The KT/V should be 1.2 or greater.

What You and Your Physician Can Do to Improve Your Dialysis Treatment

You can:

- Keep all your scheduled appointments for dialysis
- Complete your full treatment time
- Double check your machine settings
- Follow your diet and fluid restrictions
- Take all your medications as prescribed
- Report any changes with your access

Your doctor may:

- Increase your dialysis treatment time
- Change the size of your dialyzer
- Increase the blood flow rate
- Refer you to your Vascular Team to check your access for problems

Causes of Inadequate Hemodialysis

- Cutting treatment time
- Missing Hemodialysis treatments
- Decreased blood flow rate
- Non adherence to diet and fluid intake
- Inadequate treatment related to access problems

How You Will Feel If Not Receiving Enough Dialysis

Dialysis treatment replaces only a small part of your kidney function. It is very important that you are receiving enough dialysis. Poor dialysis can cause:

- Shortened life/death
- Weakness
- Poor appetite
- Nausea
- Weight Loss
- Malnutrition
- Increased infection risk
- Prolonged bleeding
- Inflammation of the heart

Causes of Inadequate KT/V with Peritoneal Dialysis

There are some different reasons you may not be getting adequate Peritoneal dialysis. These include:

- Skipping dialysis exchanges
- Reducing fill volume for dialysate fluid
- Shortening dwell time of dialysate in the abdomen
- Peritonitis (infection in the abdomen)
- Catheter problems
- Peritoneal membrane changes

What You and Your Doctor Can Do to Improve Your Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) Treatment

You can:

- Follow PD prescriptions, diet and medication orders
- Never cut your treatment time
- Tell your care team of any changes with your catheter or overall health

Your doctor may:

- Adjust your prescription for dialysis
- Order antibiotics if an infection is identified

My Questions

Ask Your Care Team:

- What are my adequacy numbers?
- What do I need to know about my machine set up?
- What if I can't stay my full treatment?

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