

Being Active to Improve Health and Quality of Life

Being active by including exercise in your daily life helps improve your health and quality of life. Living with kidney disease may limit what type of exercise you can do, but should not keep you from being active. It is important to talk to your doctor about the best type of activity and any limits before getting started. In addition to the benefits of being more active, there are some things to think about when getting started including medical concerns, what types of activities to do and how to keep going.

Activity is not only exercising.
Just moving a little more can make a difference.

- Take the stairs
- Park farther away
- Do arm circles during commercials
- Mix ingredients by hand instead of a mixer
- Dance

Benefits of Being Active

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. People on dialysis can and do exercise. It helps you to feel better, do more and be more in control of your health. Including more physical activity in your day can:



Ready, Set, GO...

Here is a way for you to get started. Remember, it is important to first talk to your doctor. Your doctor may have you get physical therapy which Medicare will sometimes help pay for. If you haven't been exercising, try starting an exercise plan. Start slowly and gradually increase your level of activity.

1. Talk to your doctor and ask:

- Do I have any limitations? What about my dialysis access?
- What activities can I do? What activity should I not do? What about...
 - Walking
 - Strength building using light weights, elastic bands or your own body
 - Swimming (may not be recommended for patients on peritoneal dialysis)

2. Make a plan

- What?
 - Choose different activities to keep you from getting bored
 - Supplies you may need (walking shoes, hand weights, music)
- Where?
 - At home, in the gym, in a group (walking club or class)

- When? How often? How long?
 - Put it on your calendar like a doctor's appointment
- With whom?
 - Alone, with a friend, family member or group

3. Start slow

4. Begin to add more activity

5. Keep going

- Set goals

Check out the LIFE OPTIONS: A Program of Medical Education Institute Inc. at www.lifeoptions.org for a booklet and video patient exercise guide for people on dialysis.

Ask Your Care Team:

- What kind of exercises should I start with?
- Is there anything I should avoid doing because of my dialysis access?
- Are there any community activities that I could get involved in?