



**Missed Treatment and Reducing Hospital Visits Workbook**



**Qsource**<sup>®</sup>  
ESRD Networks

## The Importance of Not Missing Treatments

To stay healthy as a dialysis patient, it is important that you don't miss any treatments. Missing treatments increases the risk of hospitalization and death. Going to all of your scheduled treatments is one way to live a longer and healthier life.

Take an active part in your care by going to all of your treatments. It will help you feel your best!





Each of the modules in this workbook has activities that will help you, as a dialysis patient, to learn more about what happens when you miss treatments and how to avoid serious health-related problems. Let's work together on this workbook to stay healthy!



## Module 1: Setting SMART Goals

Any good plan starts with a good goal. The activities in this workbook are all about what happens when you miss treatments and how you can set SMART goals to improve your health.

Complete at least two activities. When you are done, ask your staff or Peers in Action representative to sign off. Don't know who your Peers representative is? Ask your dialysis center staff!

Module 1 Activities	
 <b>Learning</b> What is a SMART goal?	 <b>Coloring</b> What my heart looks like when I miss treatments
 <b>Main Activity</b> Set a SMART goal worksheet	 <b>Problem Solving</b> Achieving a SMART goal

\_\_\_\_\_ completed two or more activities in this module on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Patient Name Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff or Peers Representative Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff or Peers Representative Signature

## Module 1



### What is a SMART Goal?

The words in SMART can help you make a goal that you can meet!



**S**

#### Specific

The goal will focus on one idea.



**M**

#### Measurable

You can track the goal to see your progress.



**A**

#### Achievable

You can make this goal happen.



**R**

#### Realistic

The goal will take effort, but you can reach it.



**T**

#### Timely

Set dates that will help you meet your goal.

### Activity 1

Check all the sentences that are SMART goals. One is done for you. For goals that are not SMART, how could you improve them?

- I will sit through my whole treatment.
- I will attend all of my scheduled treatments in \_\_\_\_\_. (in-center hemodialysis patient)
- I will never miss a treatment again.
- I will complete all of my exchanges each day this month. (home dialysis patient)
- I will reschedule any treatments that I miss.
- I will let my Care Team know if I have to miss a treatment.



Taking part in your healthcare will make you feel better. Try writing a SMART goal to help you manage your healthcare!

Some rules to follow:

1. Be specific! Pick one behavior you want to change. For example, your goal can be going to all your treatments for one month.
2. Remember to make your goal a SMART one. The activity below will help you.
3. Think positively! Use positive language like “I can” or “I will” in your goal.

### Activity 2: Now, let's try it out!

What would you like to work on? (Ex: I want to go to all my treatments in August.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. Is it **Specific**? (Can you answer the questions who, what, when, where, and why?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is it **Measurable**? (What will you count to see if you are making progress?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is it **Achievable**? (Can this really happen?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is it **Realistic**? (If you try, can you get to your goal?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is it **Timely**? (When do you want to get to your goal?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My SMART Goal:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Module 1

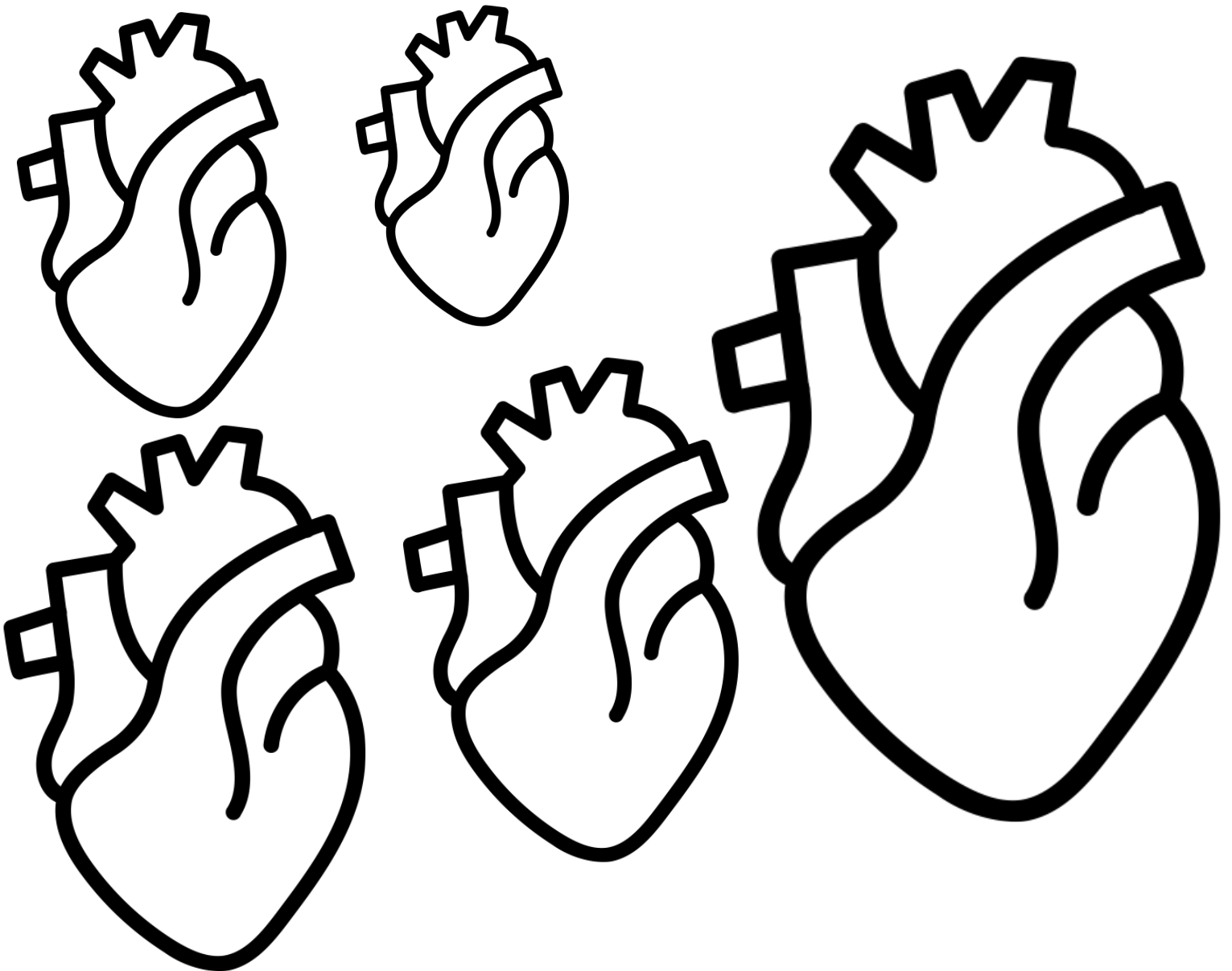


### What My Heart Looks Like When I Miss Treatments

Dialysis removes extra fluid from your body. When you miss a treatment, this fluid stays in your body and builds up to unhealthy levels. Your next treatment may not be able to remove it all. This extra fluid stretches your heart. After a long time, your heart will be unable to go back to its original size.

#### Activity 3

Pictured are different sized hearts. The smallest heart has the least amount of fluid and shows that the patient attends all treatments. Color the smallest heart GREEN. The largest heart has the most amount of fluid and shows that the patient has not attended treatments in a long time. Color the largest heart RED. The other hearts have different amounts of fluid and show that the patient attends some treatments. Color these hearts ORANGE.



## Module 1



### Achieving a SMART Goal

As an in-center hemodialysis patient, sometimes you might have another appointment on your treatment day. Use a SMART goal to help you attend all of your scheduled treatments.

#### Activity 4

You have a doctor's appointment on a treatment day next month. Check all of the resolutions below that will help you attend your doctor's appointment and your scheduled treatment.







- Miss the appointment and the treatment
- Reschedule the doctor's appointment for a non-treatment day
- Miss the dialysis treatment
- Reschedule the dialysis treatment
- Miss the doctor's appointment

## Module 2: Reduce Hospitalization

This module will focus on decreasing your visits to the hospital. ESRD patients have a large burden of disease. They have higher rates of being readmitted to the hospital or visiting the emergency room (ER) compared to most people. Some admissions/ER visits could be prevented. Be sure to communicate with your dialysis facility. Use the resources in this module to learn what you can do to reduce your risk of being hospitalized.



Complete at least two activities. When you are done, ask your staff or Peers in Action representative to sign off. Don't know who your Peers representative is? Ask your dialysis center staff!

Module 2 Activities	
 <b>Learning</b> Avoid Hospitalization	 <b>Activity</b> Dialysis Patient Identification Card
 <b>Learning</b> Choose Medical Care	 <b>Problem Solving</b> How to Avoid Hospitalization

\_\_\_\_\_ completed two or more activities in this module on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Patient Name Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff or Peers Representative Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff or Peers Representative Signature









## Tips to Avoid Hospitalization

There are ways to improve your overall health and reduce trips to the hospital emergency room.

### Activity 1

Use these pocket-sized tip cards to learn how to avoid hospitalizations. Ask your dialysis staff to print these and share with other patients.

<p><b>Tips to Avoid Hospitalizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete all treatments</li> <li>• Follow your fluid intake orders</li> <li>• Follow renal diabetic diet</li> <li>• Keep hands and access clean</li> <li>• Keep all appointments with doctors</li> <li>• Follow medicine schedule</li> <li>• Get your vaccinations</li> </ul>  <p>You know your body, and you are your best advocate.</p>	<p><b>Tips to Avoid Hospitalizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete all treatments</li> <li>• Follow your fluid intake orders</li> <li>• Follow renal diabetic diet</li> <li>• Keep hands and access clean</li> <li>• Keep all appointments with doctors</li> <li>• Follow medicine schedule</li> <li>• Get your vaccinations</li> </ul>  <p>You know your body, and you are your best advocate.</p>
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## Module 2



### How To Choose Medical Care

When you're feeling sick or have an injury, there are several places you can go for medical care: a doctor's office, an urgent care center, a retail health clinic or the emergency room. Here's a quick guide to help you know where to go.

#### Activity 2

Use this guide to help you choose where to get medical treatment.



#### Doctor's Office

##### For non-emergency situations

- Your doctor knows your health history, including medications and chronic conditions.
- Lower co-pay than a trip to the emergency room.
- Shorter wait times.
- Your doctor can refer you to a specialist or other medical professionals.
- Contact your dialysis facility before going to the hospital or emergency room (contact your primary care provider if the issue is unrelated to ESRD).



#### Urgent Care or Retail Health Clinic

##### If you can't reach your doctor or need care outside of regular office hours

- Walk-in clinics are found in many large pharmacies and retail stores.
- They treat simple conditions, such as cold, flu, ear infections and skin conditions.
- Staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
- Physicians on staff can provide care for a greater range of conditions, including performing x-rays.



#### Emergency Room (ER)

##### For urgent, acute and life-threatening conditions

- If you have a health emergency, call 911 or go to the emergency room right away.
- Do not visit the ER for routine care or minor illness. One of the other options will save you time and money and clear the way for patients in need of emergency treatment.
- Contact your dialysis facility after discharge from the hospital or ER and to reschedule any missed dialysis treatments.

**This guide is for educational purposes only.**

**Always contact your doctor with any questions related to your healthcare.**

## Module 2



### Dialysis Patient Identification Card

A dialysis patient identification card allows you, a caregiver and clinician to be aware of your dialysis needs.

#### Activity 3

Cut out this identification card and keep it with you always. Make sure you complete the card and update it regularly as information may change.



I AM A DIALYSIS PATIENT		DIALYSIS CENTER INFORMATION	
Name: _____		<b>Please contact the dialysis center for dialysis prescription and orders.</b>	
DOB: _____		Dialysis Unit Name: _____	
Address: _____		Phone: _____	
_____		Emergency Hotline: _____	
Primary Phone: _____		<b>IMPORTANT PROVIDER INFORMATION</b>	
Other Phone: _____		Nephrologist: _____	
<b>ALLERGIES</b>		Nephrologist Phone: _____	
_____		Pharmacy: _____	
_____		Pharmacy Phone: _____	
<b>EMERGENCY CONTACT(S)</b>			
_____			
_____			
_____			

## Module 2



### How Can I Avoid Hospitalization?

Some hospital admissions or ER visits can be prevented by taking steps to improve your health and avoid risks and complications.

#### Activity 4

Complete this crossword puzzle to learn more about how to improve your health and avoid hospitalization.

#### Word Bank

- medicine
- clean
- treatments
- fluid
- diet
- doctor
- vaccines



#### ACROSS

1. Complete all dialysis \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Keep all \_\_\_\_\_ appointments.
3. Watch your \_\_\_\_\_ intake.
4. Get your \_\_\_\_\_.

#### DOWN

1. Take \_\_\_\_\_ as prescribed.
2. Follow your renal \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Keep your hands and access \_\_\_\_\_.

## Module 3: Avoid Missing Treatments

Missing dialysis treatments leads to health problems and death. Complete the activities in this section to learn what happens if you miss treatments and how you can avoid missing treatments.

Complete at least two activities. When you are done, ask your staff or Peers in Action representative to sign off. Don't know who your Peers representative is? Ask your dialysis center staff!



### Module 3 Activities



#### Learning

The risks of missing treatments



#### Coloring

Fluid management



#### Main Activity

Missed treatments word search



#### Problem Solving

Avoid missing treatments

\_\_\_\_\_ completed two or more activities in this module on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Patient Name Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff or Peers Representative Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff or Peers Representative Signature

## Module 3



### The Risks of Missing Treatments

Missing your dialysis treatment increases your risk of hospitalization and death. If you miss one treatment a week for a year, this is a total of 52 missed treatments. It's the same as missing four months of treatments! Signing off early also adds up to about 10 missed treatments per year.

#### Activity 1

Below is a word bank. Use the words and phrases to fill in the blanks to learn the risks of missing treatments.

#### Word Bank

- transplant
- 25%
- ER (emergency room)
- 51%
- fluid
- swelling, shortness of breath, high blood pressure, and weight gain

1. Missing treatments increases the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ in your body.
2. Missing one treatment a month increases your risk of death by \_\_\_\_\_ or 1 in 4 in the next two years.
3. Missing treatments leads to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you miss three or more treatments, you will have to treat at the \_\_\_\_\_ before you can come back to the dialysis center.
5. Missing two treatments a month increases your risk of death by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Missing treatments may increase your risk of not receiving a kidney \_\_\_\_\_.

## Module 3



### Missed Treatments Word Search

#### Activity 2

The words below are things you can avoid by going to all of your treatments. Words might be diagonal or backward.

- |                    |                      |                         |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Hospitalization | 5. Headaches         | 9. Swelling             |
| 2. Death           | 6. Coughing          | 10. High Blood Pressure |
| 3. Illness         | 7. Trouble Breathing | 11. Tiredness           |
| 4. Weight Gain     | 8. Sleeplessness     |                         |

B R H E U N S S E N D E R I T A X  
T L I L L N E S S O R N B R A I C  
W E G O N C D U E A F G I H S O T  
S E H N O T W E I G H T G A I N S  
L U B O R S T E M O N S A C W X O  
E R L B S W E L L I N G D O E F R  
E G O H I P J L O K R N B U R T H  
P R O C T E I M O N D C O G S R E  
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S G E I N J N O B U I M O G T I C  
N E S T G N O U C V W Z L W E R H  
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S C U A I R Y E R Z Y A E T F O S  
S E R Y T A B O P L Y Z U N I M E  
W O E T R W Q X Z O J N E R T O N  
T R O U B L E B R E A T H I N G N

## Module 3



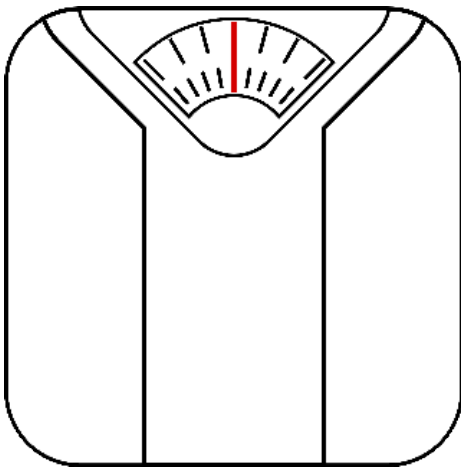
### Fluid Management

Because dialysis helps remove the excess fluid from your body, it is important to limit how much fluid you have between treatments. The more fluid that needs to be removed, the harder it is on your body. Excess fluid can cause health problems like high blood pressure, shortness of breath, swelling, and weight gain.

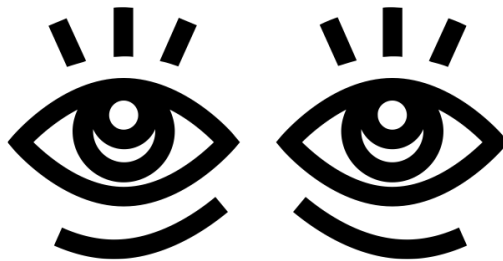
#### Activity 3

Color these images related to fluid management.

Weight Gain



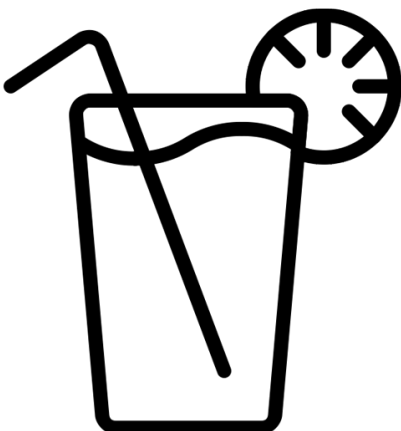
Puffy Eyes



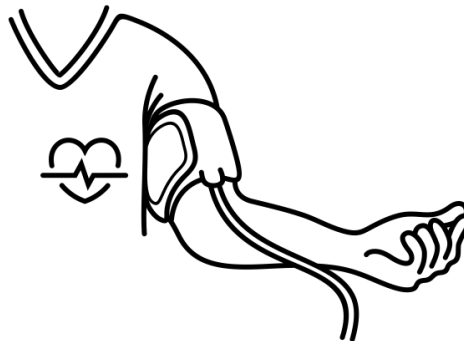
Swollen Ankles



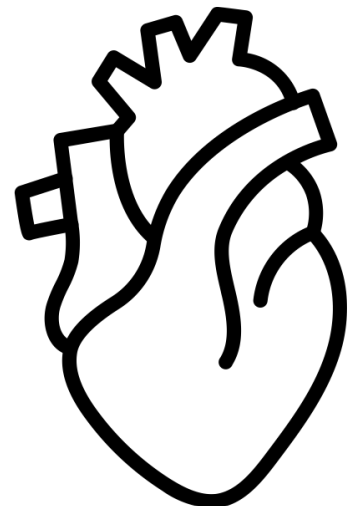
Fluid Intake



High Blood Pressure



Heart Damage



## Module 3

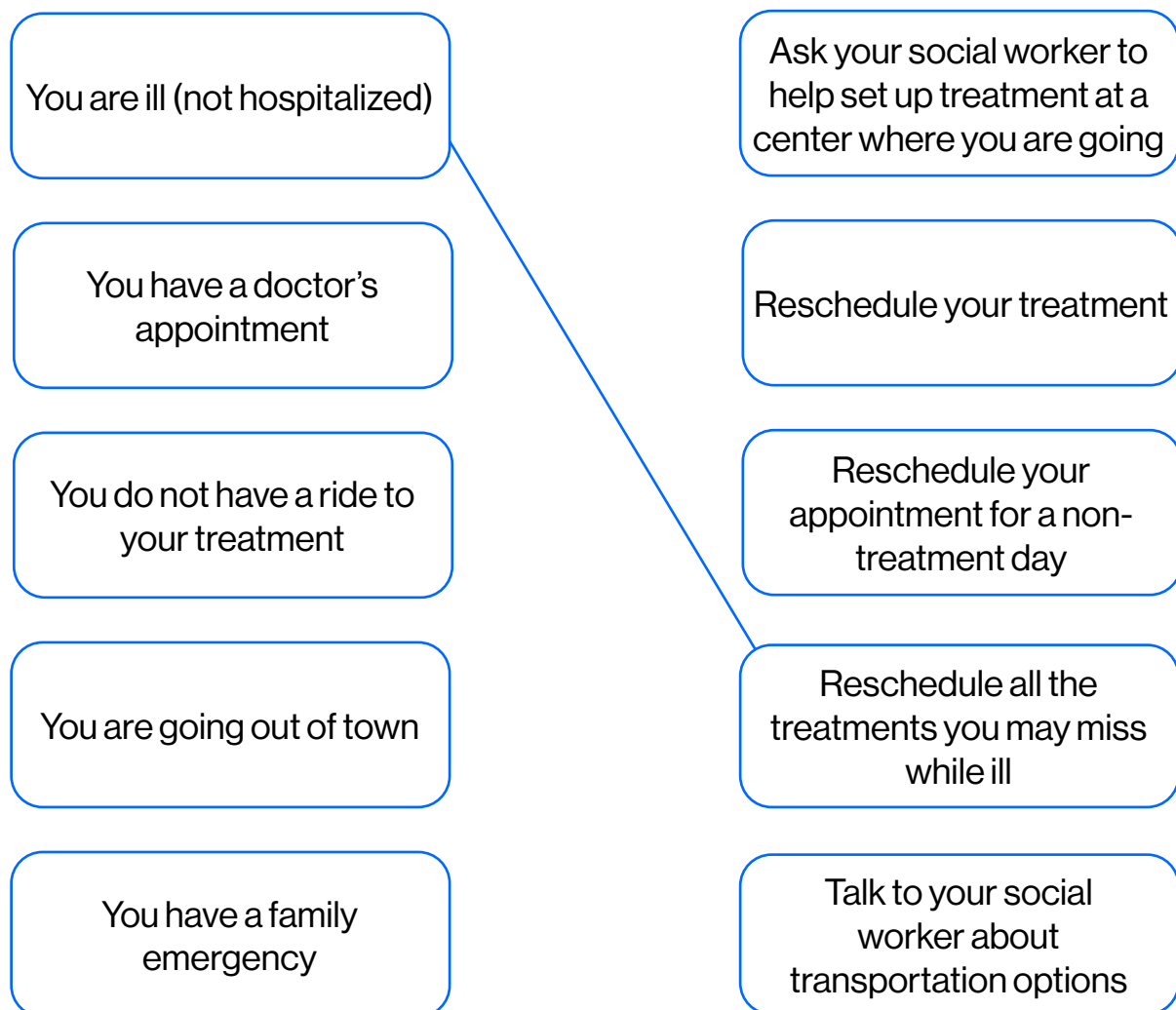


### How Can I Avoid Missing Treatments?

Sometimes an important event conflicts with your scheduled treatments. Maybe you have to go out of town or have a doctor's appointment. Your life doesn't need to be controlled by your dialysis schedule, but you should consult with your care team to resolve scheduling conflicts and make sure you get the treatment you need.

#### Activity 4

- Match the reason for missing a treatment on the left with a resolution to make sure you get treated on the right. One is done for you.
- Create a calendar with your treatment schedule to make sure you don't schedule other things during treatment times.



When you have a conflicting appointment, like a doctor's appointment on a treatment day, write it down in the notes on the left and your resolution, like rescheduling the appointment, on the right.

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2025						
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August 2025						
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September 2025						
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October 2025						
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Conflict	Resolution

When you have a conflicting appointment, like a doctor's appointment on a treatment day, write it down in the notes on the left and your resolution, like rescheduling the appointment, on the right.

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April 2026						
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June 2026						
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July 2026						
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December 2026						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Conflict	Resolution






Additional Resources



## Is It Worth the Risk? Missing or Shortening Dialysis Treatments

Missing dialysis treatments carries risk. You may not immediately feel the effects, but studies show that inadequate dialysis will shorten your life expectancy.

### Complications and Risks

-  **Worsened Anemia and Bone Disease** as a result of not receiving scheduled intravenous medications at dialysis
-  **Irregular Heartbeat, Cardiac Arrest and Death** from high potassium levels
-  **Increased Likelihood of Strokes** leading to disability and death
-  **Cramping and Low Blood Pressure** during next dialysis session due to removing the extra built-up fluid from missed treatment
-  **Fluid Overload** which causes shortness of breath from fluid in the lungs that may require an emergency room (ER) visit or an emergency dialysis treatment

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:

**Qsource ESRD Networks**

3725 Champion Hills Drive, Ste. 3100  
Memphis, TN 38125

**ESRD Network 10:** Toll-Free: 800-456-6919

**ESRD Network 12:** Toll-Free: 800-444-9965



**Shortening Treatments**  
by 15 minutes = 39 hours per year!



**Missing Treatments**  
once a week = 52 treatments a year!



## Is It Worth the Risk?

# Missing Peritoneal Dialysis Exchanges

Missing your exchanges carries risk. You may not immediately feel the effects, but studies show that inadequate dialysis will shorten your life expectancy.

## Complications and Risks



### Infection

Higher risk of acquiring an infection by missing exchanges



### Fluid Overload

Could be caused by you reabsorbing dirty solution or by not following your fluid restrictions



### Cardiac Complications

Irregular heartbeat, cardiac arrest and death due to high potassium levels



### Toxic Build-up

Can cause nausea, vomiting and change in mental status



### High Blood Sugar

Uncontrolled blood sugars will not allow you to ultrafiltrate



### Transplant

Skipping exchanges will hurt your overall health and your chances to get a transplant

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**ESRD Network 10:** Toll-Free: 800-456-6919

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## Risks of Shortened or Missed Treatments


It is very important to receive your full dialysis treatments as prescribed by your doctor. Coming for every treatment and staying for the full time is important to getting “adequate” dialysis. You may not think cutting treatment by 30 minutes or missing a treatment once a week makes a difference, but over time every minute adds up. See the charts below on how time missed for a 4 hour treatment adds up.

- 

Fluid overload. Too much fluid can cause shortness of breath and possible hospitalization.
- 

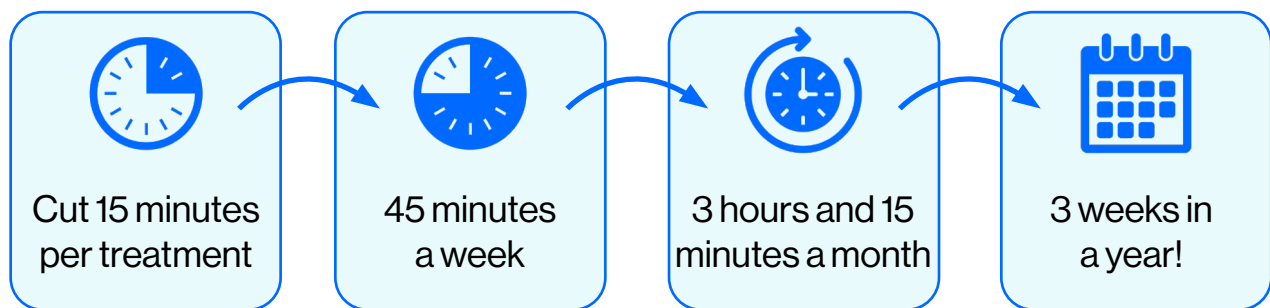
Severe cramping and hypotension at the next treatment because extra fluid will have to be removed.
- 

Missing injected medications can worsen anemia and bone disease.
- 

High potassium can cause heart problems, including irregular heartbeat, heart attack, and/or death.
- 

High blood pressure can cause a stroke which can lead to permanent disability and/or death.

Missed Treatments	Dialysis Minutes	Dialysis Hours
1	240	4
2	480	8
3	720	12
4	960	16
5	1,200	20
6	1,440	24
7	1,680	28
8	1,920	32
9	2,160	36
10	2,400	40
11	2,640	44
12	2,880	48
13	3,120	52



For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:

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## Answer Keys

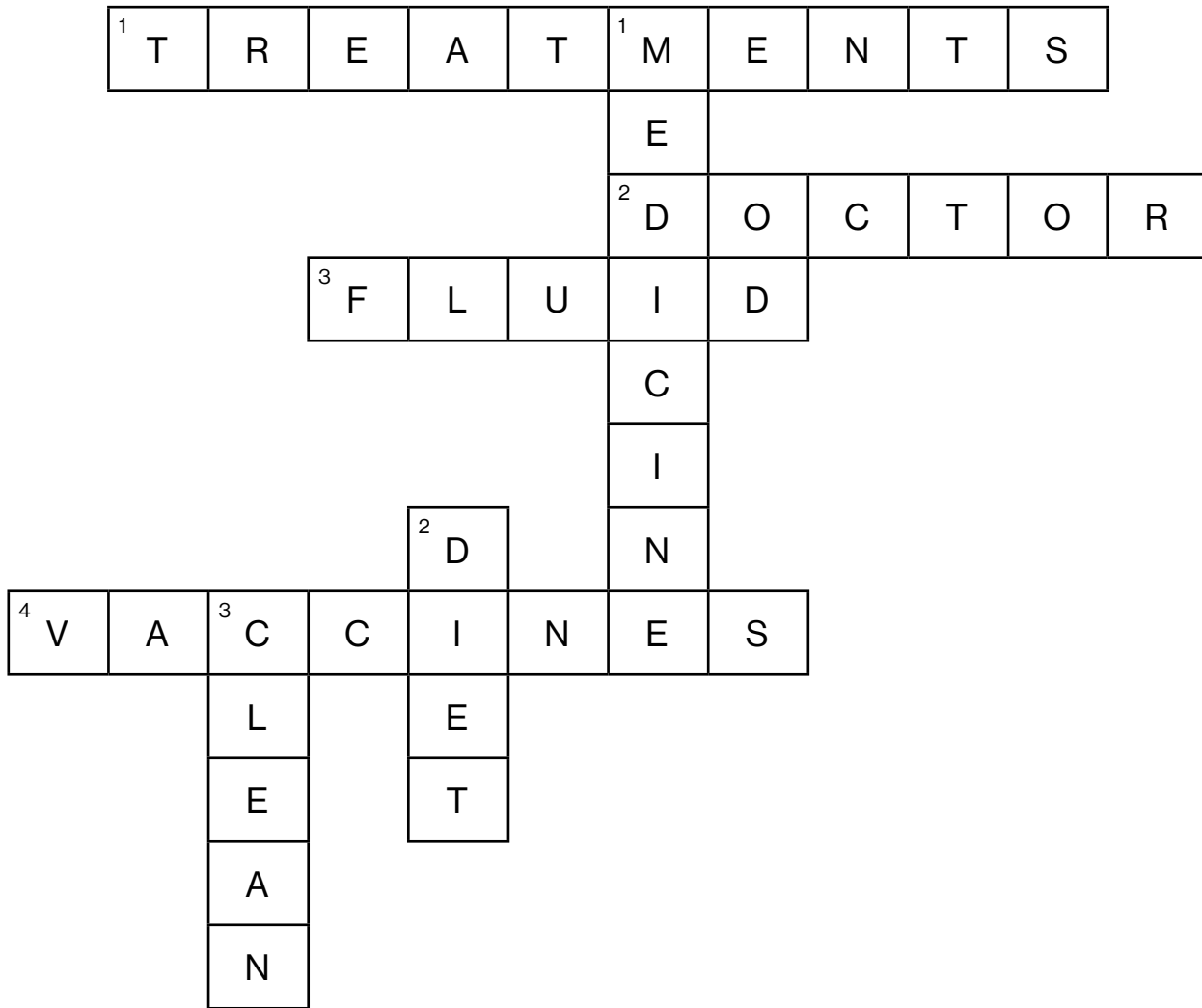
## Module 1 | Activity 1: What is a SMART Goal?

- I will sit through my whole treatment.
- I will attend all of my scheduled treatments in     (ex: February)    . (in-center hemodialysis patient)
- I will never miss a treatment again.
- I will complete all of my exchanges each day this month. (home dialysis patient)
- I will reschedule any treatments that I miss.
- I will let my Care Team know if I have to miss a treatment.

## Module 1 | Activity 4: Achieving a SMART Goal

- Miss the appointment and the treatment
- Reschedule the doctor's appointment for a non-treatment day
- Miss the dialysis treatment
- Reschedule the dialysis treatment
- Miss the doctor's appointment

Module 2 | Activity 4: How Can I Avoid Hospitalization?



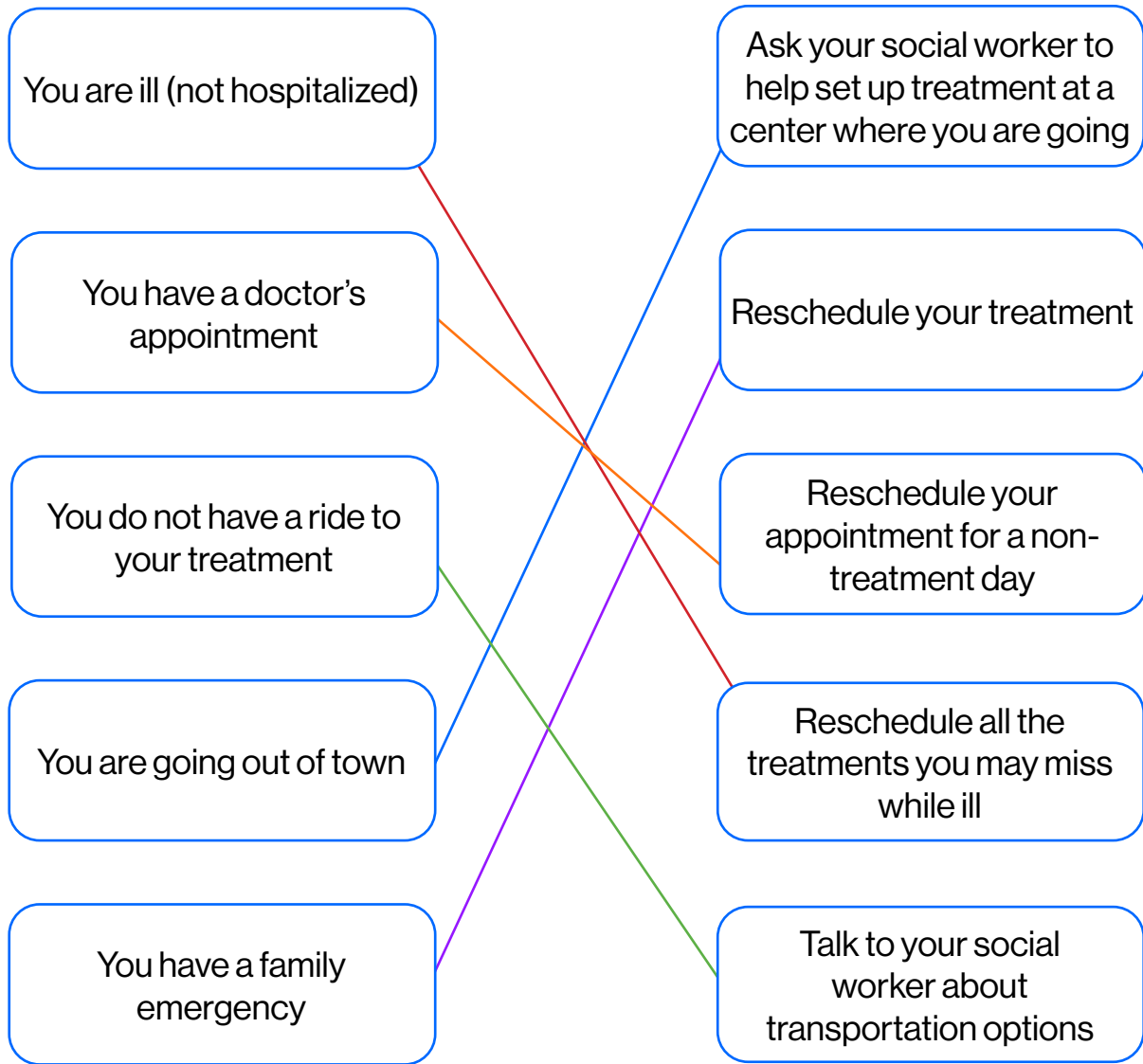
### Module 3 | Activity 1: The Risks of Missing Treatment

1. Missing treatments increases the amount of fluid in your body.
2. Missing one treatment a month increases your risk of death by 25% or 1 in 4 in the next two years.
3. Missing treatments leads to swelling, shortness of breath, high blood pressure, weight gain.
4. If you miss three or more treatments, you will have to treat at the ER before you can come back to the dialysis center.
5. Missing two treatments a month increases your risk of death by 51%.
6. Missing treatments may increase your risk of not receiving a kidney transplant.

Module 3 | Activity 2: Missed Treatments Word Search

B R H E U N S S E N D E R I T A X  
T L I L L N E S S O R N B R A I C  
W E G O N C D U E A F G I H S O T  
S E H N O T W E I G H T G A I N S  
L U B O R S T E M O N S A C W X O  
E R L B S W E L L I N G D O E F R  
E G O H I P J L O K R N B U R T H  
P R O C T E I M O N D C O G S R E  
L O D U D E A T H C W G I H R T A  
E X P S O M E N A R E T W I G N D  
S U R E N E X T B L O O B N E C A  
S G E I N J N O B U I M O G T I C  
N E S T G N O U C V W Z L W E R H  
E X S U R W O I O V C R A T W I E  
S C U A I R Y E R Z Y A E T F O S  
S E R Y T A B O P L Y Z U N I M E  
W O E T R W Q X Z O J N E R T O N  
T R O U B L E B R E A T H I N G N

Module 3 | Activity 4: How Can I Avoid Missing Treatments





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