

# My Treatment: Am I Getting Enough Peritoneal Dialysis?



Healthy kidneys work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When kidneys stop working well, dialysis is needed to remove fluid and waste products, such as urea, from the blood. When you have high levels of urea in your body, it can mean that other harmful toxins are building up. Dialysis only filters a portion of what a healthy kidney does.

Adequate dialysis means your treatment is removing enough urea and fluids to help you live long and well even with kidney disease. When you start dialysis, part of your kidneys may still be working to remove some toxins and fluid. Over time, your kidneys will work less, and your dialysis needs will change. Your care team will look at several factors to find out if you are getting enough or “adequate” dialysis.

## Why Is It Important to Get Enough Dialysis?

Dialysis treatment replaces only a small part of your kidney function. It is very important that you get enough dialysis. Over time, if you do not get enough dialysis, you can increase your risk of infection, hospitalization, and death. Getting enough dialysis will help you live long and well. You can get too little dialysis, but never too much.

Poor dialysis may cause:



you to feel ill



your skin to itch or turn yellow or darken



you to feel short of breath



you to not want to eat



your hands, feet or ankles to swell up with fluid



you to feel depressed



you to lose weight



you to feel tired or weak



your thinking to be slower

## How Is Adequacy Measured?

Just like your medications, dialysis is measured in doses. Your doctor will prescribe a dose of dialysis. One way to find out if you are getting enough dialysis is to do a test called the Peritoneal Dialysis Adequacy Test or Kt/V. This test measures the waste products in your urine and dialysis drainage. Each month, the clinic will test your blood to see whether dialysis is removing enough urea or blood urea nitrogen (BUN).



The initial Kt/V urea should be done within one month of starting peritoneal dialysis, then every 4-6 months and/or if there is a change in your dialysis prescription. The dialysis clinic will give you containers to collect your urine and dialysis drainage for 24 hours. These are sent to the lab and tested. Samples of drain fluid, urine and blood are used to calculate your Kt/V. The results will come back as a number- the higher the number the better.



Your Kt/V should be 1.7 or higher to ensure you are getting enough dialysis.



Your doctor will review the results and may make changes. As your kidney function goes down over time, your dialysis prescription will need to be increased to ensure you get adequate treatment.

## How Can I Improve My Dialysis Adequacy?

To improve your results on peritoneal dialysis you should:



Do all your dialysis exchanges



Use the correct fill volume for dialysate fluid



Complete your full dwell time of dialysate in the abdomen



Tell staff about changes with your catheter or overall health



Report signs of peritonitis (infection in the abdomen)



Follow your kidney diet



Take all your medications as prescribed

## My Questions: Ask Your Care Team

- What are my adequacy numbers?
- What should I do if I miss an exchange?
- What if I'm having trouble with my dwell times?

Source: [www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

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