



## Nursing Home Staff Education

# How to Care for Your Dialysis Patient Outside of Dialysis

Caring for patients that are on dialysis is very complex. It is imperative to be knowledgeable on the specific needs that these patients have to ensure proper care is being taken for these individuals.



### Medications

- There are a lot of medications to keep track of, many of which are time-sensitive and require a strict schedule, such as phosphorus binders.
- Do not administer any over-the-counter medicines and natural health products without talking to the doctor first, as this individual's kidneys are not functioning at a normal level and they could be adversely affected by these medications.
- Do not administer ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or similar medicines, unless otherwise instructed by the physician. These medicines may make kidney problems worse.
- You may be asked to hold all blood pressure medications on dialysis days prior to dialysis, as the treatment could lower the patient's blood pressure to an unsafe level during their treatment.



### Diet and Fluid Intake

- Patients will need to limit fluids and certain foods that contain salt (sodium), potassium, and phosphorus.
- Patients may need to follow a heart-healthy diet to keep the fat (cholesterol) in their blood under control.
- Patients may need higher levels of protein in their diet.
- Patients will need to take phosphorus binders with their meals and snacks.



### Vitals and Labs

- Make sure to monitor vital signs, including weight, daily, especially on dialysis days, and communicate results with the dialysis team
- If you draw any new labs, make sure to send a copy or communicate lab results with the dialysis team



## Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) Catheter

- Wash your hands with antibacterial soap or use waterless hand sanitizer or gel before catheter care.
- When caring for the exit site, always start close to the catheter and move away to prevent pushing germs toward the exit site, commonly referred to as the “bull’s eye technique.”
- Apply doctor-prescribed antibiotic cream to the exit site every day.
- Use Alcavis disinfectant scrub prior to connecting and disconnecting each time.
- Look at the areas under and around the exit site and catheter for drainage. If drainage is occurring, notify the dialysis team about any:
  - Redness around exit site
  - Pain at exit site or tunnel
  - Cracks, slits, or holes in the catheter tubing (if you see any, place a clamp on the catheter and notify the dialysis team immediately)
- Check the connection at the transfer set and twist it to make sure it is secure.
- Always anchor the catheter to their skin with tape to prevent the tubing from being pulled tight at the exit site of the catheter. Ask the dialysis team about devices that help hold the transfer set in place. It is very important to ensure there is slack in the catheter to avoid tension at the exit site.
- Repeat exit site care if the dressing or area becomes dirty or wet.
- It is important to maintain soft bowel movements. Tell the dialysis team if there are any issues with constipation.
- The individual should be told to lift with their legs to avoid straining their abdomen and avoid heavy lifting or pushing immediately after the PD catheter is inserted. Straining can cause leaks or hernia formation after the PD catheter operation. In this case, the dialysis solution will have a pink color.
- Always keep the dialysis center and after-hours phone numbers handy.
- Call the dialysis team immediately for instructions if you believe that you may have contaminated the inside of the dialysis catheter.



## Hemodialysis Catheter

- Keep the catheter dressing clean and dry. If dressing comes off or gets soiled, please call your dialysis team.
- Never remove the cap on the end of the catheter. Air must not enter the catheter. If the cap comes off, please contact your dialysis team.
- Avoid letting the catheter or catheter site go under water during a bath or shower. This would increase the chance of moisture getting near the catheter site, which can cause infection.
- The caps and the clamps of the catheter should be kept tightly closed when not being used for dialysis. Only the dialysis care team should use the dialysis catheter to draw blood or to give medications or fluids.
- If the area around the catheter feels sore or looks red, call the dialysis care team at once. Ask the dialysis team about signs and symptoms that require immediate attention.



## Home Hemodialysis AV Fistula or Graft

- Keep the access clean and watch for swelling, redness, drainage or tenderness in the area.
- Avoid trauma to the area. Injuries to the access or access arm can be life-threatening.
- Use the following guidelines to prevent the individual's access from clotting:
  - They should not wear tight watches, bracelets or tight clothing on the access arm.
  - They should avoid sleeping on the access.
  - They should not do any heavy lifting or rest purses or bags on the access area.
  - Avoid blood draws in the access arm.
- Do not allow blood pressure to be taken on the access arm.
- Avoid IV insertion in access arm.
- Call the dialysis team if you notice any changes in the individual's access or if the individual complains of any pain or discomfort with their dialysis access.
- If the access starts bleeding, please use gauze and apply pressure to the access site and call dialysis team for further instructions
- Have emergency contact information available.



## Your Dialysis Team's Contact Information

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_