Home haemodialysis

Are you considering doing haemodialysis at home?
This leaflet has been written to give you some information about doing haemodialysis (HD) at home.

**How does haemodialysis work?**

Haemodialysis is a treatment where blood is passed from the body to a dialysis machine, where the blood is cleaned. Your bloodstream will be connected to the dialysis machine for the duration of each dialysis session.

As your blood passes through the dialysis machine, waste products and excess water are removed by the ‘artificial kidney’ before your cleaned blood returns to you. With hospital haemodialysis, each dialysis session lasts for around four hours and most people need three sessions each week (e.g. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays).

**What are the benefits of having home haemodialysis?**

- You can choose the time that you dialyse (some people dialyse overnight while they sleep).
- Less travelling to hospital, so you don’t have to rely on transport.
- With home HD you can decide with your kidney doctor and nurse how often and how long you dialyse, for example you may decide to have shorter, more frequent dialysis sessions (e.g. 5-7 days per week for 2 hours at a time).

**Research has shown that more frequent HD may help you with the following:**

- better blood pressure control
- better phosphate level (you can be less strict with your low phosphate diet)
- better fluid balance (you may be able to drink a bit more fluid on daily HD)
- fewer medications
- fewer cramps on dialysis
- better quality of life.

**Will home haemodialysis be an option for me?**

If you have other medical conditions or often become unwell on dialysis, then home dialysis may not be suitable for you. Your kidney doctor will discuss this with you.

Do you have someone at home with you? Ideally it would be better if you had someone who could help you during your dialysis treatments. Occasionally people do dialyse on their own, but you would need to discuss the possible risks involved with your kidney doctor and home dialysis team.

If you decide you need a break from home HD at any time (for example when a family member is on holiday) we can arrange for you to dialyse in hospital.

Your home would need to be assessed to make sure there is sufficient space and a suitable electricity and water supply. The renal unit technicians and a dialysis nurse will come to your home to talk about this. You will not have to pay for the installation of the dialysis machine or the additional water costs.

**When could I start?**

Everyone is different, but the training programme to teach you how to dialyse at home usually takes about 6-12 weeks. In the meantime the technicians will arrange for the necessary plumbing to be carried out in your home, to connect the machine.

You will need to start your treatment in the hospital. This will involve a training programme that will teach you all about haemodialysis. This includes taking care of the machine, sorting out any issues you may have and taking care of your dialysis access (your fistula, graft or line).
Who can I call for help?

If you have a problem between 7.00am to 7.00pm please contact your local dialysis unit and speak to a dialysis nurse. Your local unit may also offer a twilight service (up until midnight), they will let you know which days this is available. A 24 hour support line is also available for technical problems. You will be given this information and the contact numbers at the time of your training.

In an emergency you would call 999 as usual.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALS@ouh.nhs.uk