Reducing the risk of infection when using Peritoneal Dialysis

Information for patients
This leaflet has been written to provide you with information to help reduce your chance of getting an infection when you are on peritoneal dialysis (PD).

Infections related to peritoneal dialysis do not happen often, but if you do get an infection you will need treatment with antibiotics, which would involve spending time at the hospital. You may also need an operation to remove your PD catheter. If you have a severe infection you may not able to go back onto PD and will need to have haemodialysis instead.

If you notice a problem, never leave it. It doesn’t matter how small you think it is, please let us know.

There are two types of infection related to PD treatment; PD peritonitis and exit site infection.
What is PD peritonitis?
PD peritonitis is an infection inside your abdominal cavity and around your peritoneal membrane.

What causes PD peritonitis?
It is often caused by contamination of your PD catheter by bacteria (germs), which leads to an infection. The bacteria may come from inside your abdomen or from your skin. An exit site infection may also lead to peritonitis.

How will I know if I have PD peritonitis?
You may experience some of the following:
- cloudy PD fluid
- abdominal pain
- feeling sick
- a high temperature
- diarrhoea or severe constipation.

What should I do if I have abdominal pain?
If you have abdominal pain, it is important that you check your PD fluid straight away and call your local PD Unit if it is cloudy. The telephone numbers are on page 7.
What can I do to reduce my risk of PD peritonitis?

**Make sure you carry out the following, every time you do your PD:**

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, if they are visibly dirty.
- Use alcohol gel to clean your hands thoroughly, even if you have just washed them, before you:
  - remove your dressing
  - touch your PD line
  - touch any of your PD supplies.
- Remind yourself regularly about good hand hygiene, by looking at your training booklet.
- Look after your PD exit site; use your creams and supplies as you have been shown.
- Keep any pets or young children away from the area where you do your PD.
- Try not to cut corners. Do your PD as your PD nurse has shown you.

**Remember what to do if you have a problem:**

- Your PD nurse will have shown you which parts of your PD supplies or PD line you must **not** touch. If you touch any of these parts, stop doing your PD and phone your PD Unit immediately for advice.
- If you have a cold and are coughing or sneezing, turn your head away from your exposed PD supplies or line.
- If you do sneeze or cough on your line, **stop** doing your PD and phone your PD Unit. Your PD nurse will arrange for you to have your line changed (this will be done in your local PD Unit, or Renal Ward at the weekend). A line change takes just a few minutes.
- If you cough or sneeze on the exposed parts of your PD supplies, **throw** them away and start again.
- If you drop your exposed PD line, phone your PD Unit and your PD nurse will arrange for you to have your line changed.
What should I do if I have cloudy PD fluid?

**Phone your PD Unit immediately. Do not wait.** If your local PD Unit is closed, contact the Renal Ward at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford. The telephone numbers are on page 7.

PD peritonitis will not get better without treatment. A sample of your PD fluid and a blood test will be sent to Microbiology to find out what bacteria is causing the infection. You will need specialist treatment with two antibiotics over a period of 2-3 weeks.

**It is important that PD peritonitis is treated quickly, to prevent you from becoming unwell.**

What is an exit site infection?

An exit site infection is an infection where the PD catheter comes out through your skin. Infection can also develop where your catheter goes under your skin into your abdomen. This is called a tunnel infection.

How will I know if I have an exit site infection?

You may experience one or more of these around the catheter exit site or along the catheter tunnel:

- redness or swelling
- pain or discomfort
- oozing or pus.
What should I do if I notice any of these problems?

**Phone your PD Unit immediately.** If your local PD Unit is closed, contact the Renal Ward at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford. The telephone numbers are on page 7.

You will need to have your exit site examined by a PD nurse or renal doctor. A swab will be taken of any pus and sent to Microbiology to find out what bacteria are growing. PD exit site infections are treated with antibiotics.

Your PD nurse will advise you how to care for your exit site whilst you have an infection.
Useful contact numbers

**Oxford PD Unit**
Tel: 01865 225 792
Answerphone service
(8.30am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday).
A PD nurse will respond to your message within the hour.

**Milton Keynes PD Unit**
Tel: 01908 996 495
Answerphone will give you the PD nurse details

**Wycombe PD Unit**
Tel: 01494 426 349
Answerphone will give you the PD nurse details

**Swindon PD Unit**
Tel: 01793 605 288
Answerphone will give you the PD nurse details

**Renal Ward**
Tel: 01865 225 780
This is for urgent calls, 24 hours a day. It is also the number to ring after 6.00pm on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays.

Email: pd.team@ouh.nhs.uk
(8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)
Further information

The Oxford Kidney Unit website has information about the Unit, which you and your relatives and friends might find useful.
Website: [www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku/](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku/)

**Kidney Research UK**
Information on PD peritonitis
Website: [www.kidneyresearchuk.org/health-information/peritonitis](http://www.kidneyresearchuk.org/health-information/peritonitis)

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**

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