

My Life: Coping with Dialysis

Coping with the changes dialysis brings to your life can be hard. One thing that can be very helpful is keeping your life as “normal” as possible. You may need to change your daily routine or activity level. You should try to stay involved in the activities that you enjoyed before your kidneys stopped working, or explore new activities. This page will review some of the things that patients have shared that have been helpful for them to live well with kidney disease.



Be Informed

- Learn about treatment options and pick what will best fit your lifestyle.
- Ask questions about your care and how to get involved. You are the most important person on your healthcare team.
- Attend treatment plan meetings.



Be Involved

- Many people on dialysis or transplant continue to work or go to school. Others travel, attend church, are active in their community or stay busy with clubs, hobbies or volunteer work.
- You might want to become active in your dialysis or transplant clinic as a patient representative. Start or join a clinic support group.
- Being informed about your own healthcare will make you feel more comfortable with your treatment.



Be Active

- Exercise at least every other day, even if you just walk around your house several times.
- Talk with your doctor about the kinds of exercise that will work best for you.
- If cost is a concern, many local YMCAs offer programs and some insurance plans offer health club membership and classes.







Be Positive

- Look at the positive things in your life and try not to focus on the negatives.
- Do things that make you feel happy!



Be Connected

- Spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative. Talk about how dialysis or transplant is affecting you with your family and friends. Sharing can help them understand more about you and your life so they can give you support when you need it.
- Talk with other patients. It can be helpful to share common concerns and hear about solutions that have worked. You can try: talking before or after treatment in the lobby, connecting with a peer mentor or patient representative, finding an advocate, going to a support group, chatting on-line or using peer-to-peer helplines.
- Talk to your doctor or social worker. It is normal to feel sad after starting dialysis or getting a transplant. This sadness may stay for a long time or it may get worse and turn into depression. If you feel sad all the time or think about ending your life, you need to talk to a doctor or social worker right away who can work to help you feel better, or connect you with people who can help. To find help in your area contact The Hopeline at 1-800-273-8255.



My Questions | Ask Your Care Team:

1. How do I get more involved in my treatment plan?
2. Who can I talk with to find out more about exercise program opportunities in my community?
3. Are there any local peer or support groups available?

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

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