

The importance of planning ahead for treatment

If you have chronic kidney disease (CKD), your care team will work with you to keep your kidneys working as long as possible. It's important to know your treatment options if your kidney disease progresses toward kidney failure. Planning ahead gives you time to understand your choices and make the best decision for you.



Benefits of being prepared

Your care team will monitor your CKD, but there isn't a way to know exactly when you will need to start treatment as your kidney disease progresses. The best thing is to be prepared and understand your options. Planning ahead for treatment can help you:

- Lower health risks and avoid complications
- Reduce stress for you and your loved ones
- Have more treatment options to choose from
- Play an active role in making decisions about your health



Planning for dialysis

There isn't a specific kidney function level that means it's time to start dialysis. A good goal is to start dialysis before it becomes an emergency. Typically, people need to start dialysis when:

- Your kidney function gets closer to eGFR 10— however, it can be sooner if your symptoms become severe
- You start to have symptoms of uremia, such as:
 - Nausea and/or vomiting
 - Feeling foggy or forgetful
 - Being very tired
 - Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
 - Itching
 - Restless legs
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Loss of appetite or weight loss
 - Metallic or funny taste in your mouth
 - Inability to do your routine activities
 - Swelling that is difficult to manage with medications



Preparing for dialysis

Depending on the type of dialysis you choose, such as hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis, you may need a dialysis access procedure. This surgical procedure creates a way for your treatments to be done. It's good to plan ahead because this access may need up to a few months for healing.

It is also good to think ahead about your dialysis schedule and plan for any transportation needs and any changes you need to make at work or at home.

Starting dialysis unplanned in the emergency room

Emergency hospital admissions can be unsettling for you and your loved ones. If you need urgent dialysis, you may need to have a catheter placed so you can receive treatment. You may need to stay in the hospital longer to make sure you are healthy enough to start your dialysis treatment in an outpatient clinic. Planning ahead for dialysis may help avoid the need for urgent dialysis.

Making a final treatment decision

You and your care team will decide together about your treatment options. If there aren't any medical roadblocks, then the final decision is up to you.

Changing your treatment choice

Talk to your care team if you are not happy with your treatment choice. They can help you understand what options might work better for your lifestyle.

We're here to help

Your care team can help you start planning for treatment.
Reach out for support or to get your questions answered.