



*Better
Together*

Patient information

Adjusting to Haemodialysis

Nephrology Department

Learning to adjust to haemodialysis

Dialysis is both life-saving and life-changing. As you have only recently started haemodialysis treatment you will need time to adjust. Having to go on dialysis is difficult for you and those around you so give yourself time.

Try to be realistic about the differences between your life “before dialysis” and your new life “on dialysis”. Please be patient as this may take you some time to do.

People cope with dialysis in different ways but as time passes people generally adjust to the situation and can have a good quality of life on dialysis.

Attending for dialysis

When you first start dialysis the staff and other patients are strangers to you. The surroundings are new and unfamiliar and you may experience negative feelings about spending so much time on the unit. It may appear that all the patients seem to know each other but remember that they were all new to dialysis once themselves. It will take time for you to get to know the staff and other patients. As time goes on dialysis sessions will become more familiar and routine.

Passing the time

As you will be spending a lot of time attached to a machine it is important to find ways to help you to pass the time and stop you from becoming bored. Some people read, chat to others, draw, write, sleep, play cards, use a laptop, relax or watch DVD's. If you can see this as “time for yourself” you may be able to learn to enjoy this time and not see it as wasted time.

Looking after yourself

Dialysis is a life-changing process so learning how to cope with it is important. When you are new to dialysis you may feel frightened and confused at times. These feelings are normal as it is new to you.

As you learn more about dialysis and become more experienced you will know what to expect and this will help you to cope better. Remember to ask questions if there is anything you want to know.

Your emotional health

At times you may feel depressed, angry or upset. Although these feelings are normal and understandable they may impact on your health so do ask for help. There is a Clinical Psychologist who works specifically with patients with renal problems - **Maria Fraser**.

If you would like to talk to her about any difficulties you may have just ask a member of staff to refer you to her. She can see you either whilst you are on dialysis or at another time that is convenient to you.

Remember that you can also get support from staff, patients, your partner, family, friends, other health professionals and the Merseyside Kidney Patients Support Group.

The following are some helpful comments made by patients on dialysis on 6B

- Have a positive outlook – focus on what you can do **not** what you can't do
- See dialysis as necessary to keep alive- it allows you to do what you want to do
- See dialysis as a job
- Have other activities/work outside dialysis
- Get support from family/friends

Keep occupied whilst on dialysis

If you are having difficulties adjusting to dialysis and would like to discuss this with the Renal Clinical Psychologist please speak to a member of staff who can refer you.

Further Information

National Kidney Federation

Tel: 0845 601 0209

www.kidney.org.uk

British Kidney Patient Association

Tel: 01420 541424

www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk

Kidney Patient Guide

www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk

Merseyside Kidney Patients

Support Group

Tel: 07743 281113 or 07746570116

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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