

# End-Stage Renal Disease: Care Instructions

## Your Care Instructions

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End-stage renal (or kidney) disease happens when your kidneys can no longer do their jobs. They can't remove waste from your blood. And they aren't able to balance your body's fluids and chemicals.

This stage of the disease usually occurs after you have chronic kidney disease for years. Now the kidneys work so poorly that you need dialysis or a kidney transplant. Dialysis uses a machine to filter your waste. A transplant is surgery to give you a healthy kidney from another person.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

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- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you have any problems with your medicine. You also may take medicine to control your blood pressure or to treat diabetes. Many people who have diabetes take blood pressure medicine.
- If you have diabetes, do your best to keep your blood sugar in your target range. You may do this by taking medicine, eating healthy food, and exercising.
- Follow your dialysis schedule.
- Do not take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or similar medicines, unless your doctor tells you to. These may make chronic kidney disease worse.
- Make sure your doctor knows all of the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take.
- Do not smoke or use other tobacco products. Smoking can reduce blood flow to the kidneys. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Do not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.
- If your doctor recommends it, get more exercise. Walking is a good choice.
- If you have an advance directive, let your doctor know. It may include a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets your doctor and loved ones know your health care wishes if you become unable to speak for yourself.

### Diet

- Talk to a registered dietitian. He or she can help you make a meal plan that is right for you. Most people with kidney disease need to limit salt (sodium), fluids, and protein. Some also have to limit potassium and phosphorus.

## When should you call for help?

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Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have nausea and vomiting.
- You have a fever.
- You have chest pain or shortness of breath.
- You are feeling confused or are weaker or more tired than usual.
- You do not get hungry.
- You have new swelling of your arms or feet, or your swelling is worse.
- You have peritoneal dialysis and you have belly pain.
- You have symptoms of infection, such as:
  - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness at your catheter or dialysis access site.
  - Red streaks leading from the site.
  - Pus draining from the site.
  - A fever.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.



## Where can you learn more?

Go to [NextGen Knowledgebase](#).

Enter **Q937** in the search box to learn more about "**End-Stage Renal Disease: Care Instructions**."

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