

What to Do for Dialysis Access Problems

Bleeding

- For bleeding from needle puncture sites over the dialysis access:
- Apply direct pressure over the site with a folded 4-inch by 4-inch clean cloth.
- Hold pressure for at least five minutes before checking the area.
- If the bleeding does not stop after you apply pressure for 30 minutes, call your health care provider.
- If the bleeding does not stop while you apply pressure, call 911 or have someone take you to a hospital emergency room.

Infection

Call your health care provider if you develop:

- pain, redness, swelling or drainage around the dialysis access
- a fever (not with a cold or influenza).

Clotted Access

- If you cannot feel a pulse or hear blood flowing through the dialysis access, the access may be clotted. Call your nephrologist. He or she will make arrangements to have an access surgeon see you.
- If you cannot tell if your access is clotted, the hospital dialysis staff can help you. Call before coming to the dialysis unit.

Changes in Diet With a Clotted Access

- When your dialysis access is clotted, your potassium levels could get too high. If this happens, your dialysis treatment will be delayed. Eat foods low in potassium. **Do not eat foods medium to high in potassium, such as:**
 - bananas
 - grapefruit
 - grapes
 - melons
 - peaches
 - strawberries
 - mushrooms
 - peas
 - corn
 - tomatoes
 - potatoes.
- Limit the amount of liquids you drink to half of what you normally drink in one day.

For example, if you are allowed 32 ounces each day, drink only 16 ounces.

When your potassium level is back to normal and you no longer have extra fluid weight, you may return to your normal dialysis diet.

(over)

Missing a Dialysis Treatment

Dialysis removes waste products (such as potassium and extra water) from your system because your kidneys cannot remove them. Missing a scheduled dialysis treatment may be dangerous.

- Try to schedule any travel between dialysis treatments. A dialysis unit nurse can help you make arrangements to visit another dialysis unit for treatment. Tell your dialysis nurse as soon as possible when you are planning to travel.
- Illness is not a reason to miss dialysis. If you are not feeling well, you still need to go to your dialysis appointment. Tell your nephrologist how you are feeling. He or she will likely want to see you.
- Your dialysis unit will have information on what to do during bad weather.

Other Medical Emergencies

- Call 911 or your nephrologist if you have a medical emergency, such as shortness of breath or chest pain.
- If your symptoms are life-threatening, call 911 or have someone take you to a hospital Emergency Department. Be sure the health care staff knows you are a dialysis patient.