Understanding End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) & Dialysis

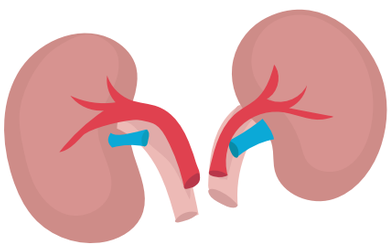
Resident & Caregiver Education Sheet

What is ESRD?

Your kidneys help:

- Remove waste from your blood
- Remove extra water
- Help control blood pressure

When your kidneys stop working well, it is called **End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).**



What is Dialysis?

Dialysisis a treatment that helps do the work your kidneys can no longer do.

Dialysis helps:

- Clean your blood
- Remove extra fluid
- Keep your body in balance

Dialysis is not a cure, but it helps you stay healthy.

Missing dialysis treatments can lead to fluid and waste build up in your body, making you very sick.

Healthy Eating

Your healthcare team will help you choose the foods and drinks that are right for you.

Choose more often:

- Lean meats, chicken, fish, or eggs
- Apples, berries, grapes, or pineapple
- White rice, pasta, or bread
- Green beans, cabbage, or cauliflower

Your healthcare provider may ask you to limit:

- Salty foods
- Foods high in potassium, such as bananas, oranges, tomatoes, and potatoes
- Foods high in phosphorus, such as dark colas and processed foods
- Fluids, if you have been given a daily fluid limit

How Can I Stay Healthy?

- Go to every dialysis treatment.
- Take your medicines as directed.
- Stay active as you are able.
- Do not smoke.
- Keep all follow-up appointments.

Take Care of Your Skin

- Use fragrance-free lotion if your skin is dry or itchy.
- Avoid scratching.
- Tell your healthcare provider about sores or skin changes.

Protect Your Dialysis Access

Your dialysis access is your lifeline.

Call your healthcare provider or dialysis team if you notice:

- Fever or chills
- Redness, swelling, pain, or drainage around your dialysis access
- Bleeding
- A loose or wet dressing

If you have a fistula or graft, do not allow blood pressure checks, blood draws, or IVs in that arm.

Call 911 Right Away If You Have:

- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Loss of consciousness
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking
- Severe weakness on one side of the body
- Bleeding that will not stop

Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions about your ESRD or dialysis care, contact your healthcare provider or dialysis team.

Planning to travel? Contact your dialysis team before your trip.

This handout is for education only and does not replace medical advice.