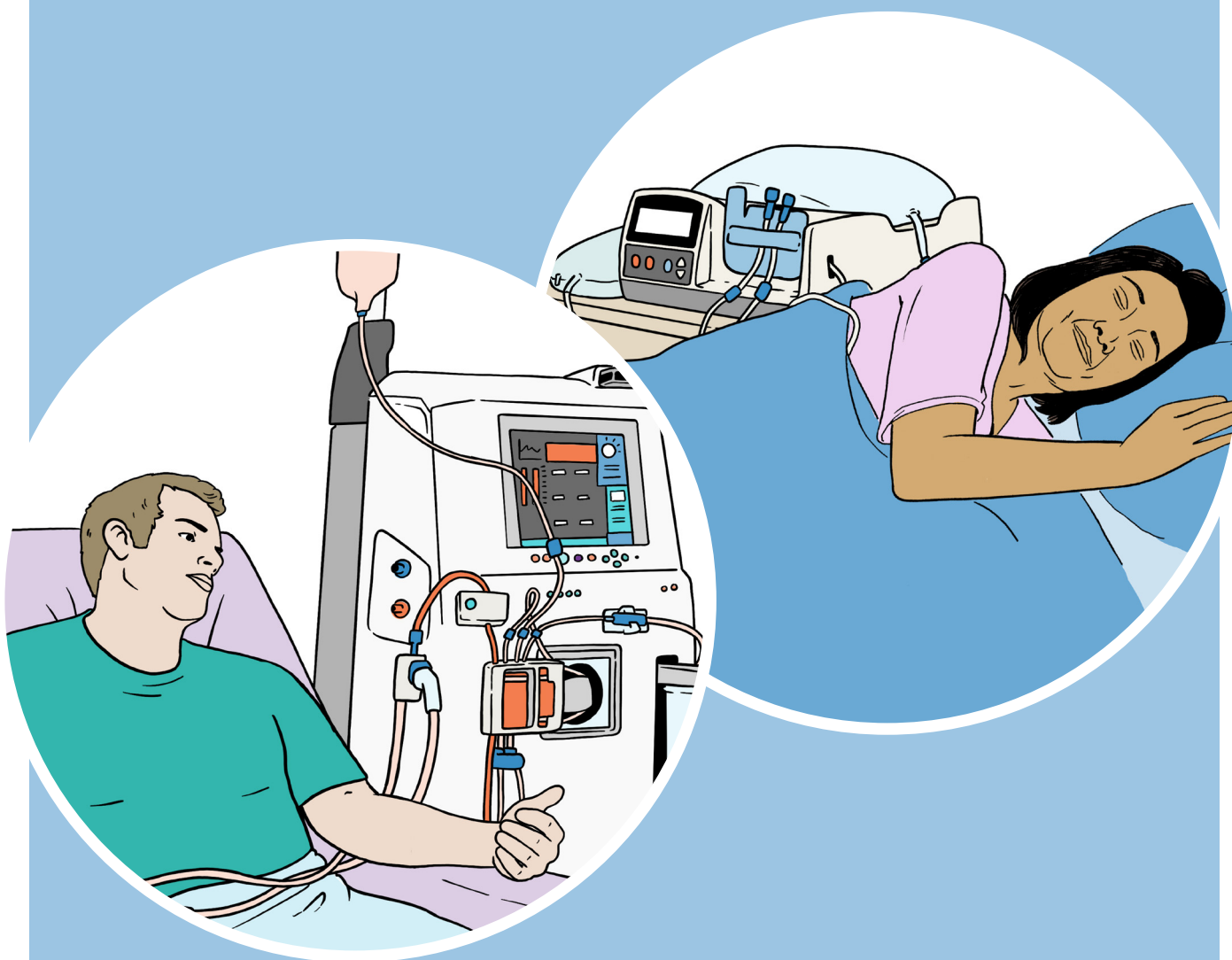
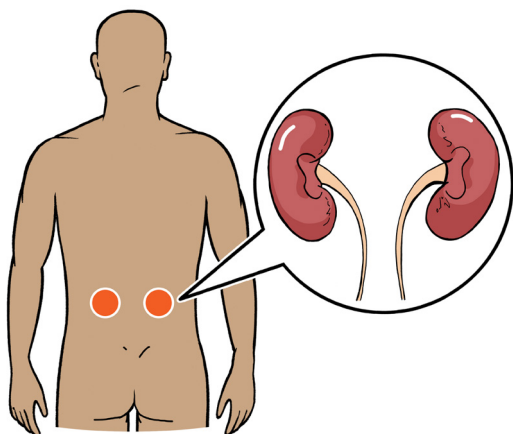


# Dialysis

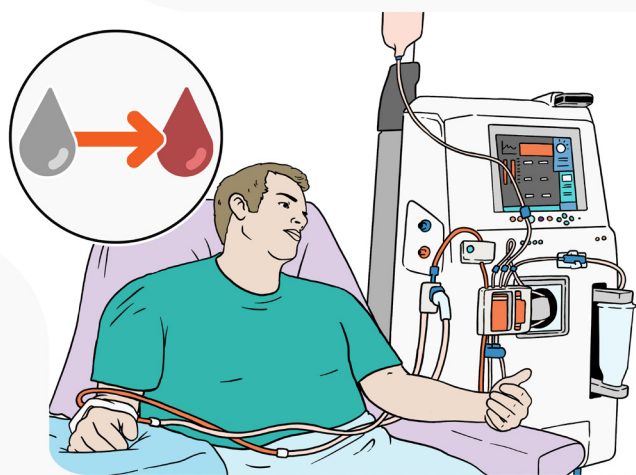
## Information booklet



# Dialysis



Your **kidneys** are organs in your body that clean your blood.



**Dialysis** is a treatment that uses a machine or equipment to clean your blood.



It is a treatment for **kidney failure**. This is when your kidneys stop working well enough to keep you healthy.

## How can dialysis help me?



Dialysis can help with the **symptoms** of kidney failure.



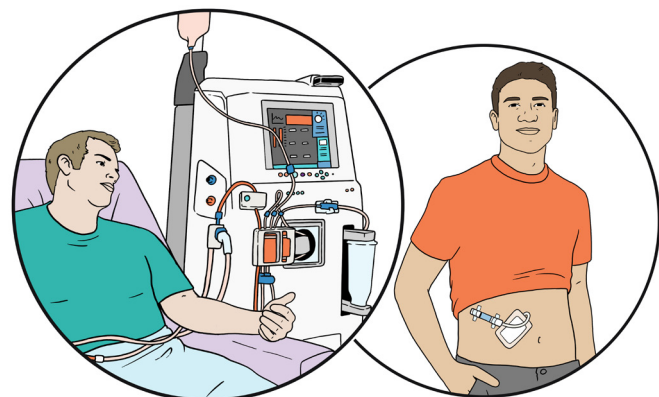
**Symptoms** are signs in your body that something is wrong, like feeling sick, tired, or weak.



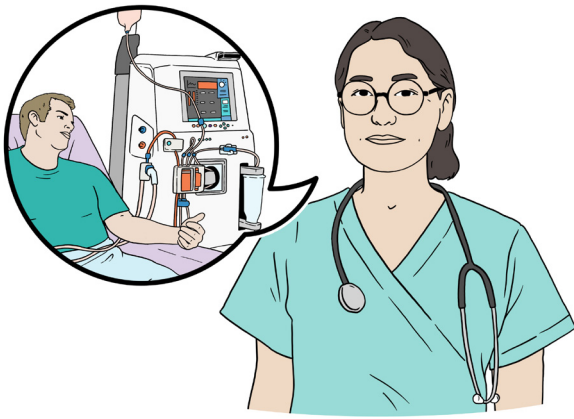
Dialysis can also help with symptoms like **shortness of breath** and swollen ankles.



**Shortness of breath** is when you find it hard to breathe normally or get out of breath easily.



There are two different types of dialysis. These are called **haemodialysis** and **peritoneal dialysis**.

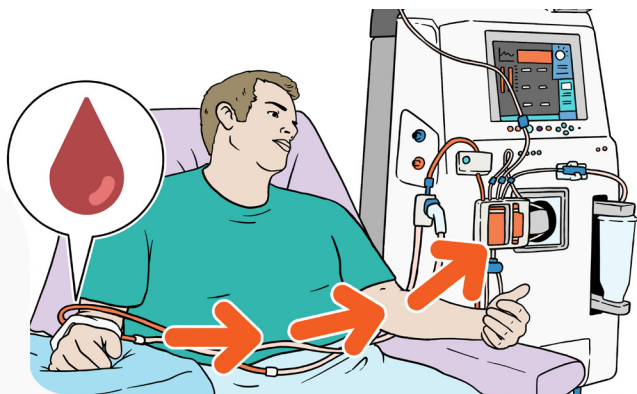


Your **kidney team** will talk to you about which type of dialysis might be best for you.

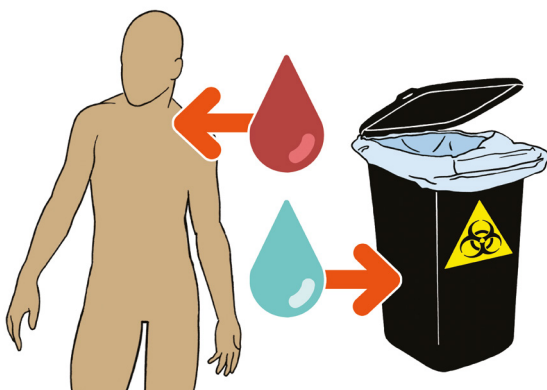


Your **kidney team** are the doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals who treat you for your kidney problems.

## Haemodialysis



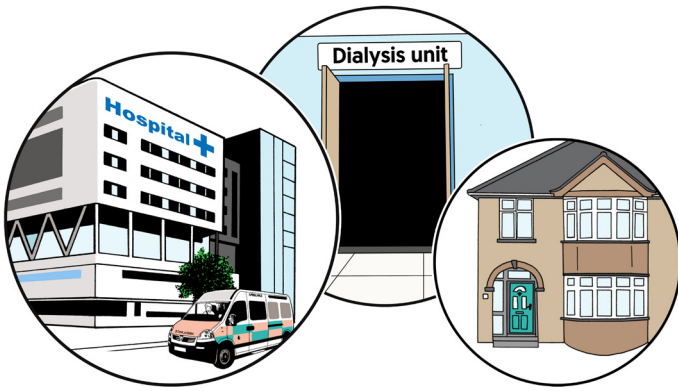
Haemodialysis cleans your blood by putting it through a dialysis machine.



The clean blood is put back in your body and the **dialysis fluid** is thrown away. **Dialysis fluid** is a liquid that helps to clean your blood.



## Where will I have haemodialysis?



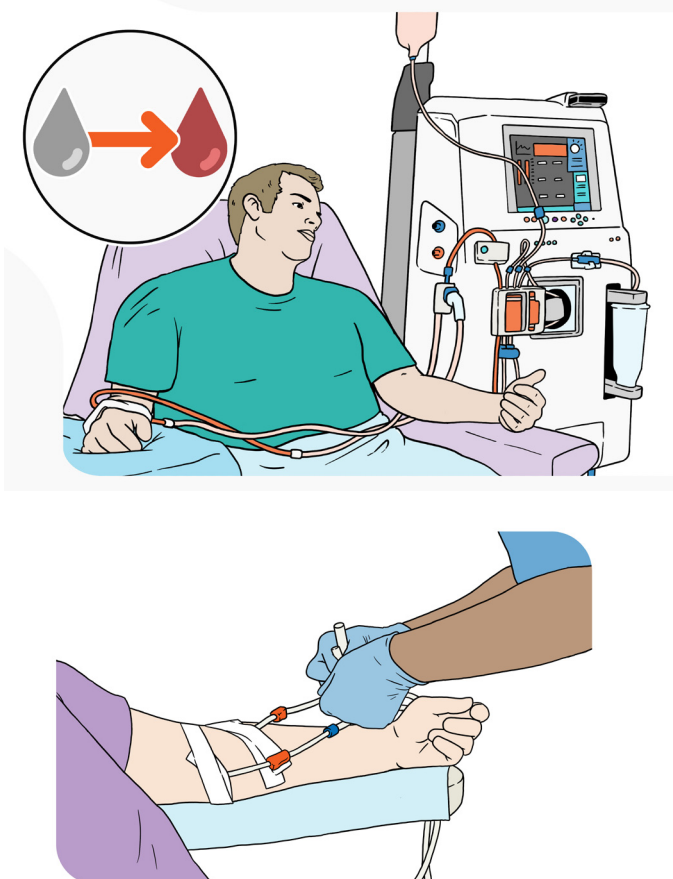
You can have haemodialysis in a hospital or in a specialist dialysis unit or at home.

## How often will I need haemodialysis?



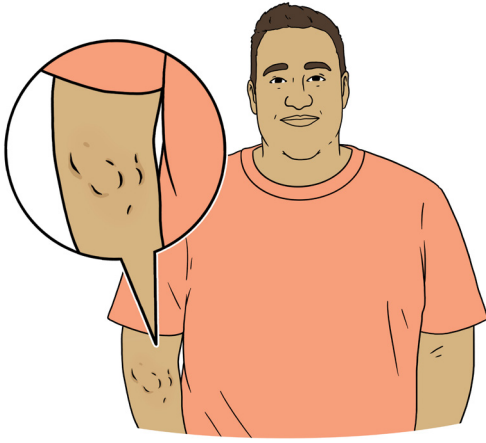
Most people have haemodialysis 3 times a week. Each session lasts around 4 hours.

## What happens before I can start haemodialysis?

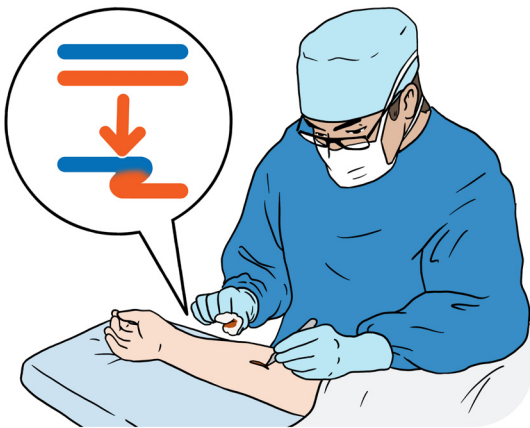


In haemodialysis your blood is taken from your body and cleaned in a dialysis machine.

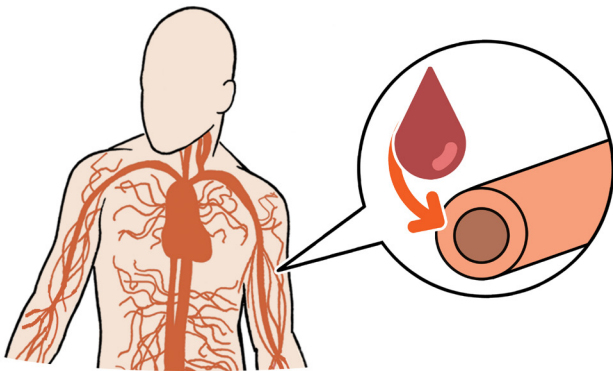
To do this your healthcare team need to create a way to connect to your blood stream. This is called **vascular access**.



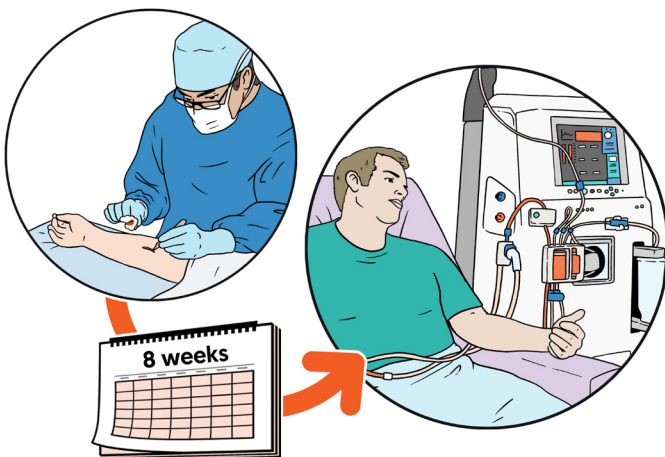
There are a few different ways to do this. But the most common kind of vascular access is a special connection in your arm called an **arteriovenous (AV) fistula**.



A **fistula** is made by a small operation to join two types of **blood vessels**. This makes one large, stronger blood vessel that can be used for dialysis.



**Blood vessels** are tubes that carry blood through your body.

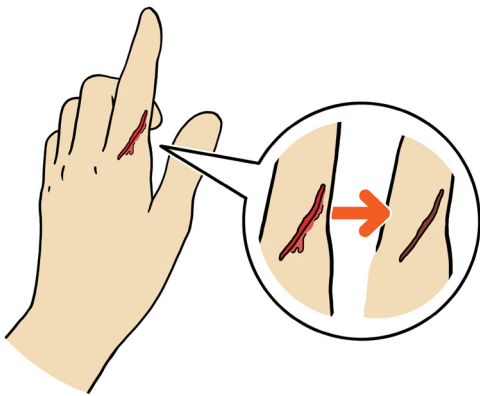


A fistula needs to be made about 6 to 8 weeks before dialysis starts. This gives it time to grow strong enough to use for haemodialysis.

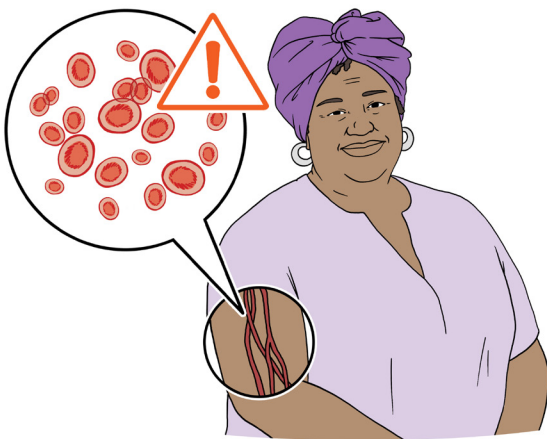
## Will I need any other medication?



You will usually have a blood thinner medication when you have haemodialysis. This is to stop your blood from **clotting** while it is in the machine. It will wear off after.

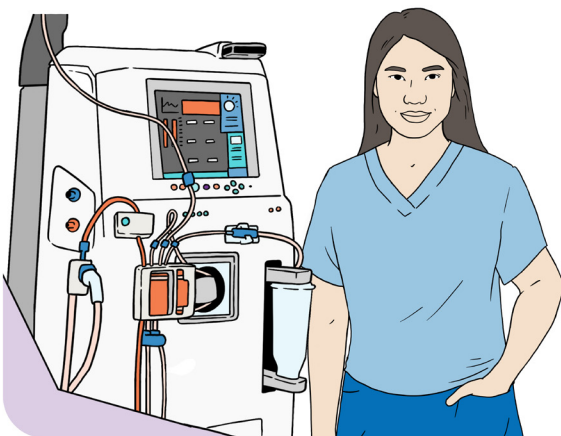


**Clotting** is when blood thickens to stop bleeding, like when a scab forms after you have a cut.



If you get **anaemia** you may be given medication. **Anaemia** is when your blood does not have enough red blood cells.

## Who will help me with my haemodialysis?

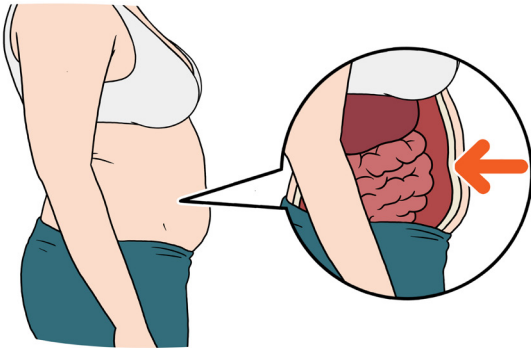


A dialysis nurse or healthcare assistant will help you with your haemodialysis.

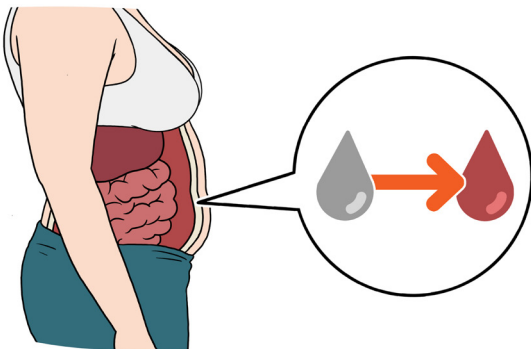


Some people choose to do some or all of their haemodialysis themselves, with support from nursing staff. This is called **shared haemodialysis care**.

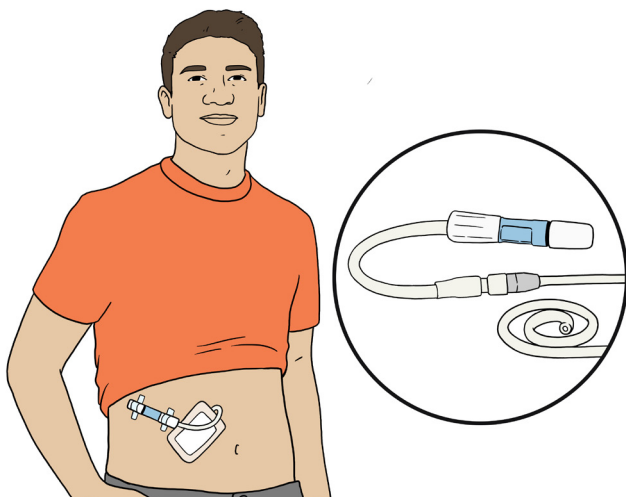
## Peritoneal dialysis



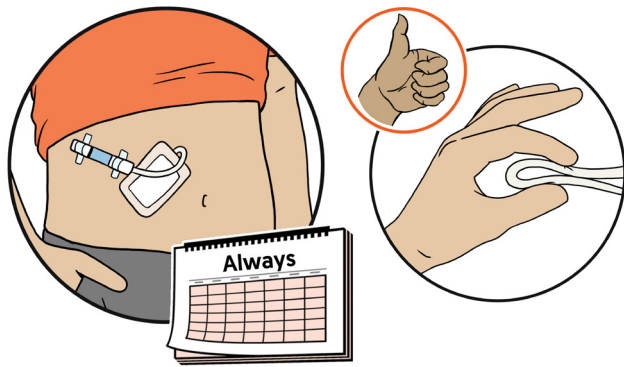
The **peritoneum** is the inside lining of your abdomen. Your abdomen is the space between your chest and hips.



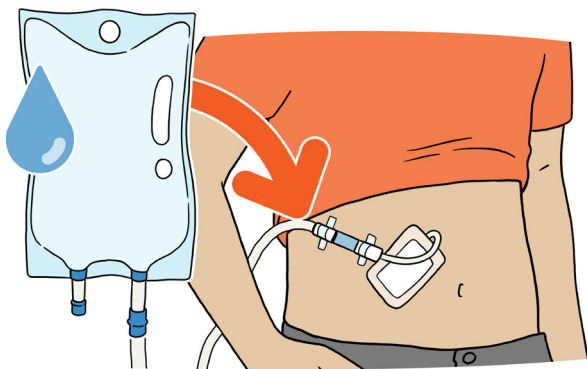
**Peritoneal dialysis** uses the peritoneum to help clean your blood, inside your body.



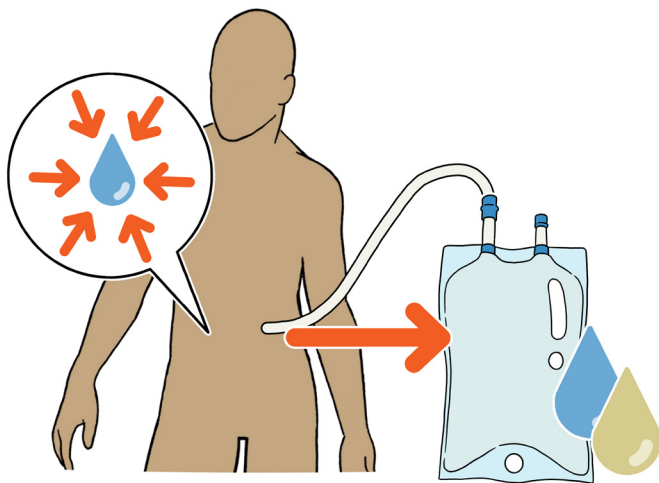
To have peritoneal dialysis you will need a soft tube called a **catheter** put into your abdomen. Part of the catheter will be outside of your body.



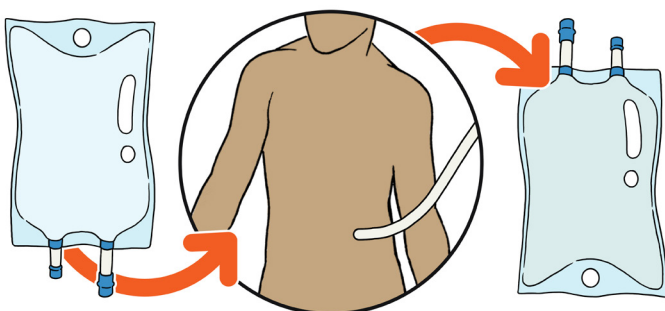
The catheter is soft and should feel comfortable. It stays in your abdomen all the time.



A special fluid called **dialysate** is sent from a bag into your abdomen through the catheter. Dialysate is made up of water, salts and other additives.

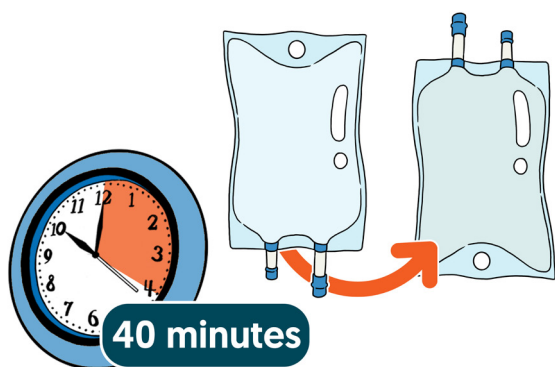


The dialysate absorbs waste, extra salts and water from your body. It is then drained out of your body, taking the waste, extra salts and water with it.



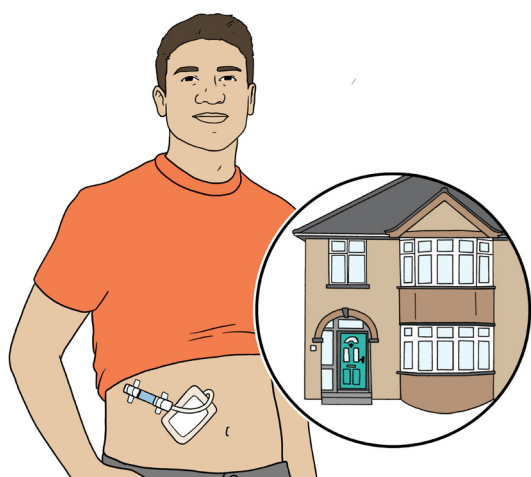
Each time you use a bag of dialysate and then drain it out is called **an exchange**.



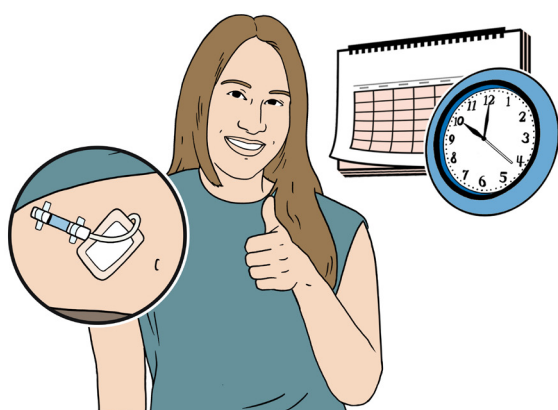


Each exchange takes around 30 to 40 minutes.

## Where will I have peritoneal dialysis?

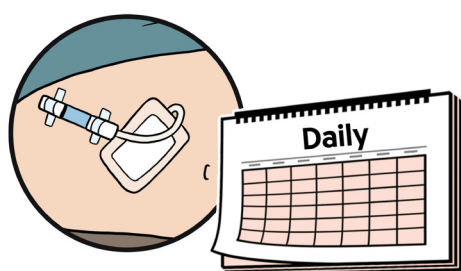


Peritoneal dialysis is done at home.

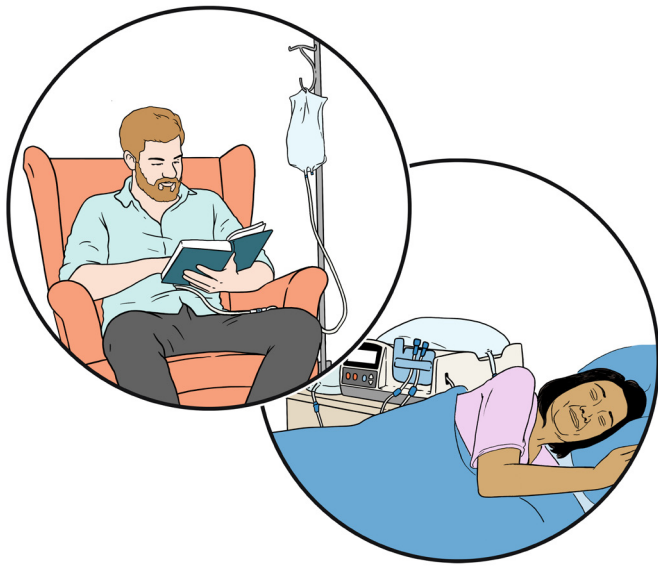


Some people find this better than going to a hospital for haemodialysis. This is because they feel more in control of their own treatment and when it happens.

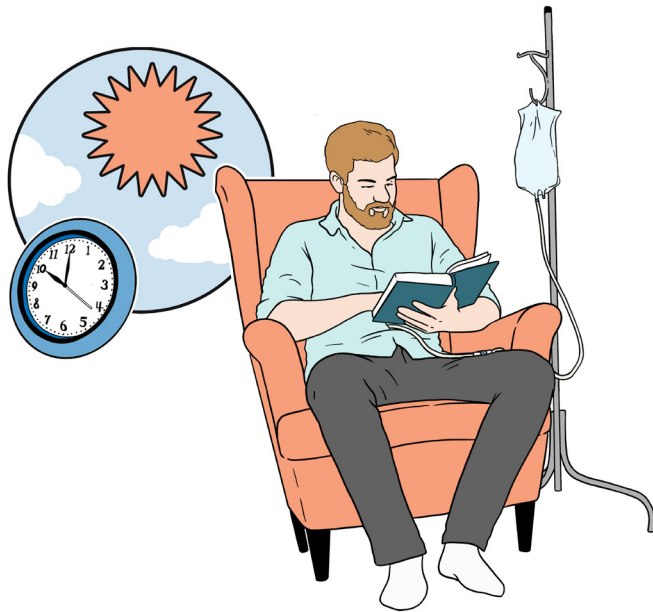
## How often will I need to have peritoneal dialysis?



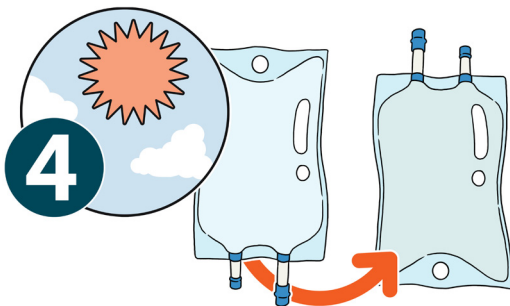
Most people have peritoneal dialysis every day.



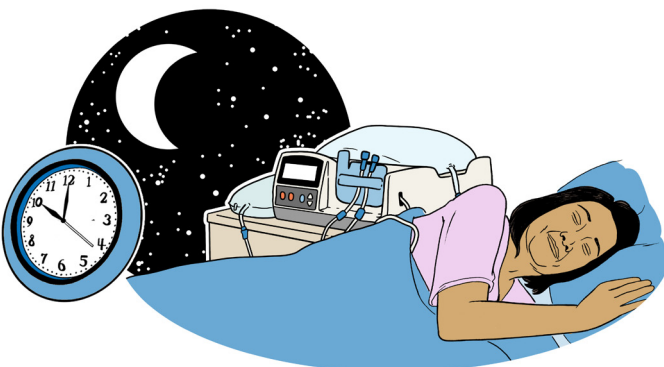
There are 2 main ways of doing your peritoneal dialysis.



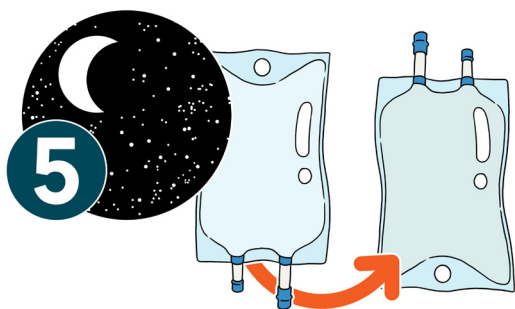
**Continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD)** is where you do your exchanges in the day time.



You will normally have between 1 and 4 exchanges each day.



**Automated peritoneal dialysis (APD)** is where a machine does your exchanges overnight while you sleep.

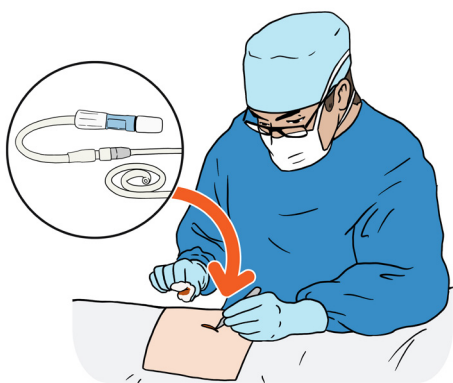


You will normally have between 3 and 5 exchanges a night over 6 to 8 hours.

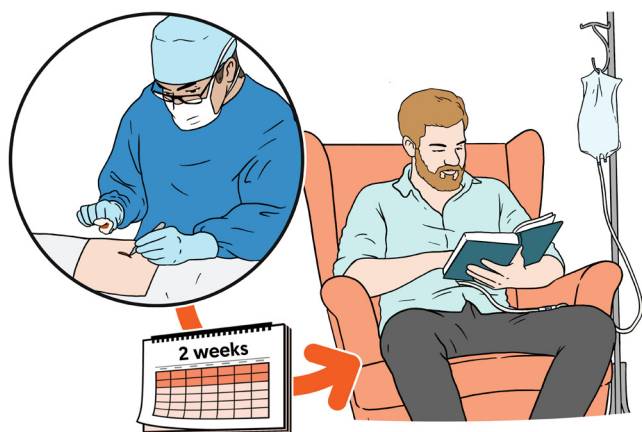


Your kidney team will talk to you about which way of having peritoneal dialysis would work best for you.

### What will happen before I start peritoneal dialysis?



You will need to have a small operation to put the catheter into your abdomen.

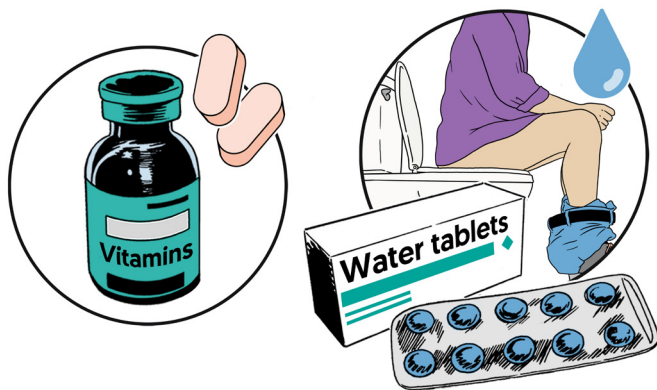


After the operation, you will usually need to wait 2 weeks to recover before you can start peritoneal dialysis.

## Will I need any other medication?



You will need to take **laxatives**. This is medicine that softens your poo. This will help your dialysis to work well.

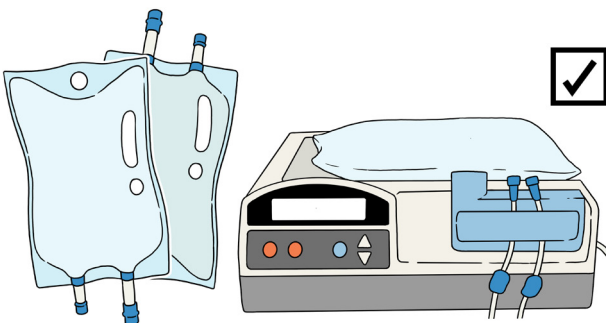


You may also need to take vitamin tablets because dialysis can remove some vitamins from the body. You might also be given a water tablet to help you wee.

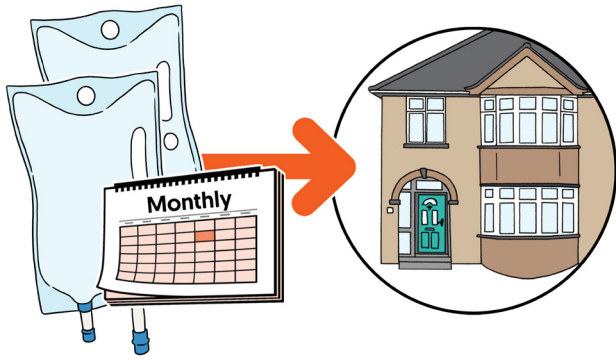
## Who will help me with my peritoneal dialysis?



A dialysis nurse or healthcare assistant will teach you how to do your peritoneal dialysis.



You will be given all the equipment you need.



You will get monthly deliveries of dialysate to your home.

## What are the side effects of dialysis?



Dialysis can cause **side effects**. These are unwanted effects from treatment, like feeling tired, sick or low in energy.

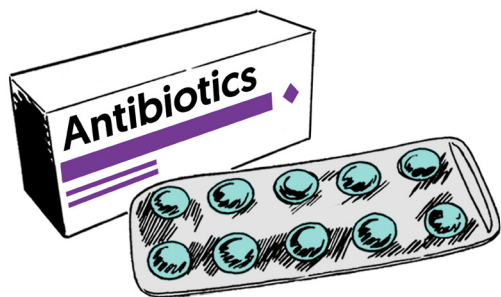


Some side effects can be helped by drinking less between dialysis sessions so that there is less fluid for the dialysis machine to remove. This is known as **fluid restriction**.



Your kidney team will tell you if you need to do this.





You may get infections. If you do these can be treated with medicine called **antibiotics**.

Your kidney team will check on you regularly to make sure you are staying healthy.

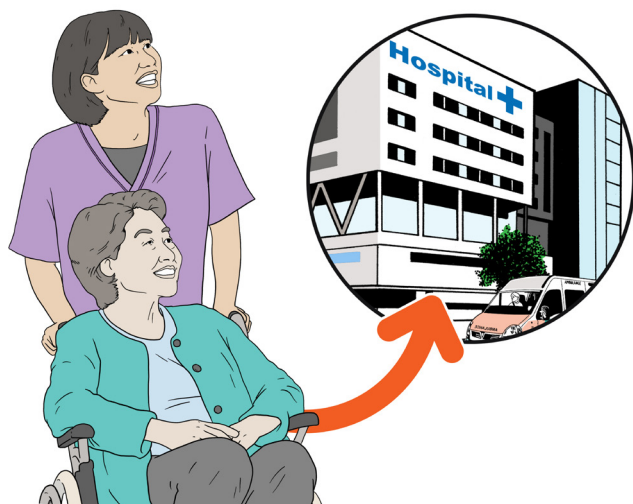
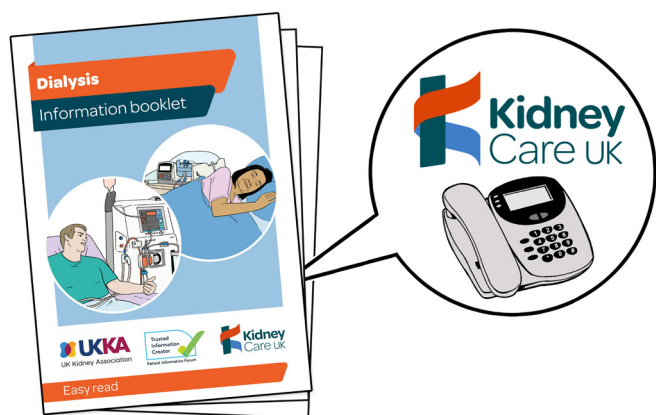
## Is there support to help me manage my dialysis?



Starting dialysis is a big change. It will affect your everyday life and routines, including work, social life and relationships.



Your kidney team are there to help you and your family.



You may find it useful to talk to a:

- **Renal social worker**

This is a professional who gives support to people with kidney disease and their families.

- **Renal counsellor**

This is a professional who can help you with your feelings about kidney disease.

- **Patient organisation**

This is an organisation that helps patients, such as Kidney Care UK. There is more information about contacting Kidney Care UK at the end of this booklet.

Talking to these professionals and organisations can help you with:

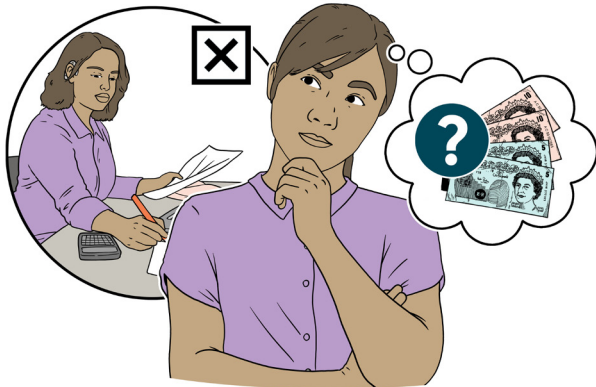
- **Practical issues**

These can be things like needing support to get to appointments.



- **Emotional issues**

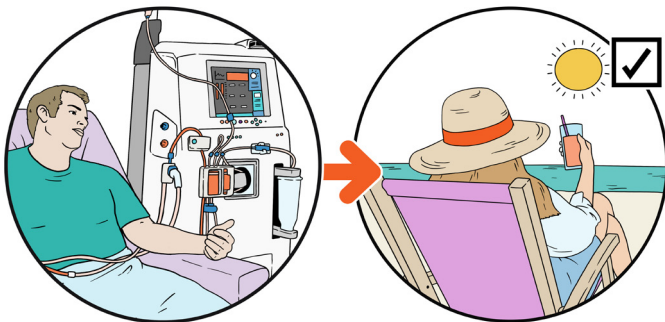
This is about how you feel.



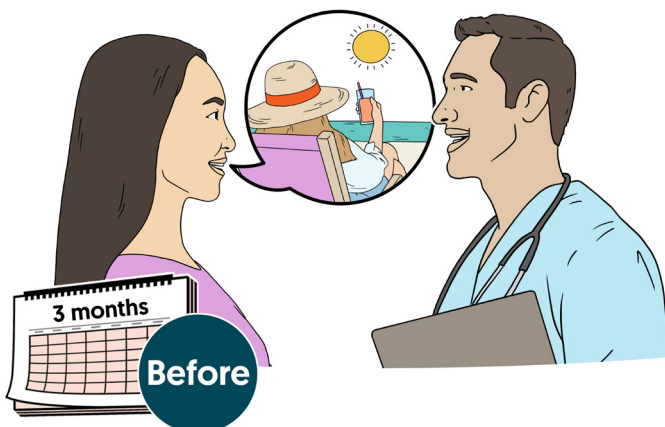
- **Financial issues**

These can be things like how to pay for things if you can not work.

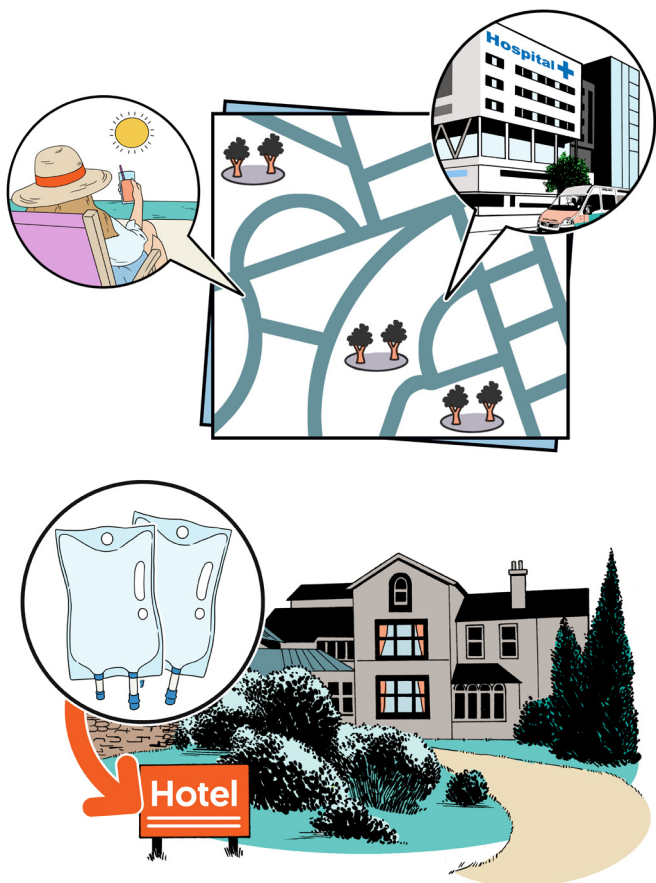
## Can I go on holiday if I am having dialysis?



Yes, you can still go on holiday if you are having dialysis.



It is important to plan your travel with your dialysis team. You should try to let them know you are going on holiday at least 3 months before your holiday.



They can help you to set up having your haemodialysis in a hospital near where you are staying on holiday.

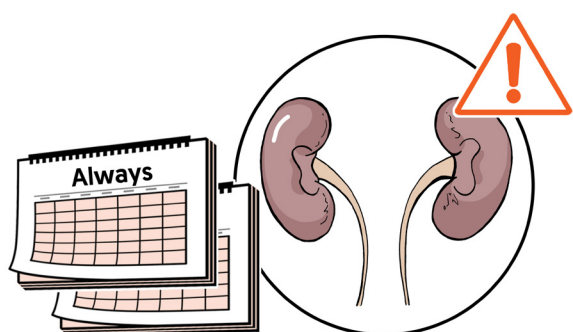
Or your peritoneal dialysis supplies may be able to be delivered to where you are staying on holiday.

## How can I stay healthy on dialysis?



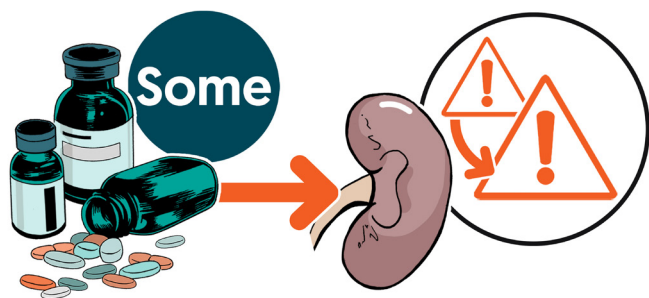
To stay healthy you can:

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist that you have **chronic** kidney disease (CKD) and check that medicine you are given is safe to take.

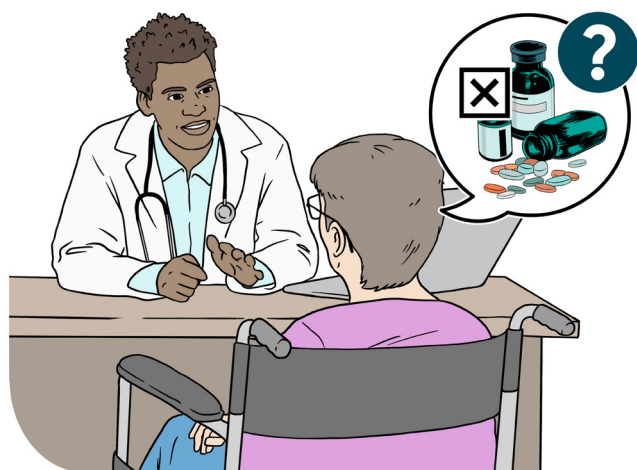


**Chronic** means that it is a long term illness and will last the rest of your life.

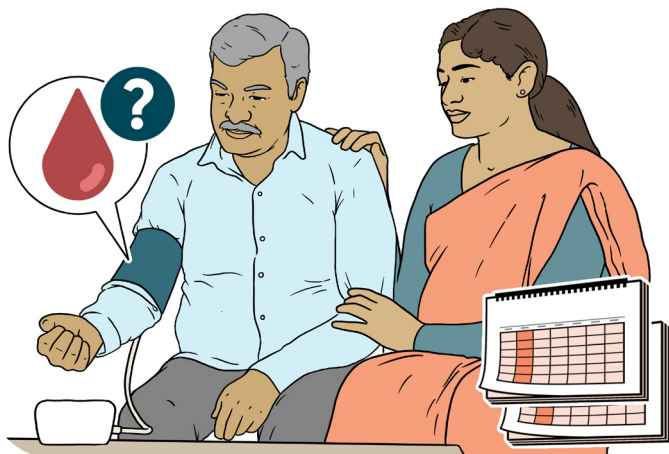




Some medicines can make your kidney disease worse.



You should not stop taking any medicine you have been given by your doctor without talking to your doctor or a pharmacist first.



- Check your blood pressure regularly.

Your kidney team can teach you how to check your blood pressure yourself at home.

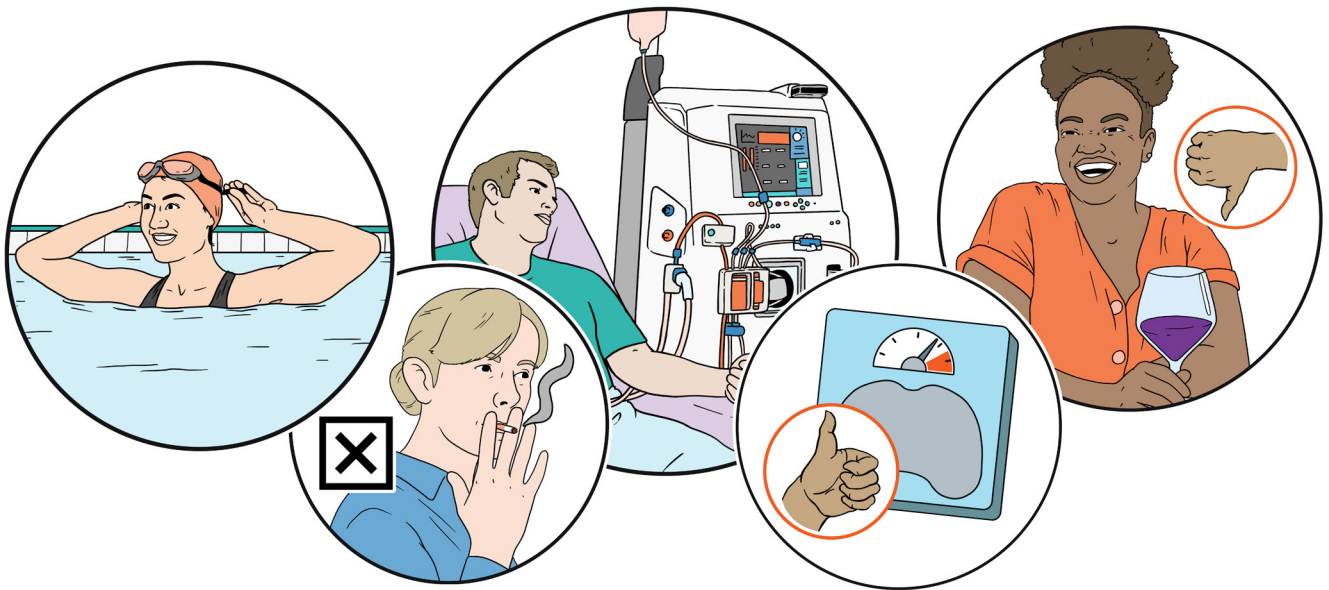


- Keep to your diet and fluid allowances.





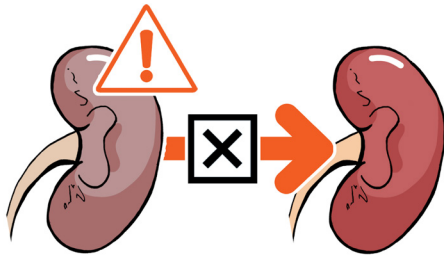
A kidney **dietitian** will tell you about any fluid restrictions and any changes that you need to make to the food you eat. A **dietitian** is someone who is a specialist in what to eat and drink.



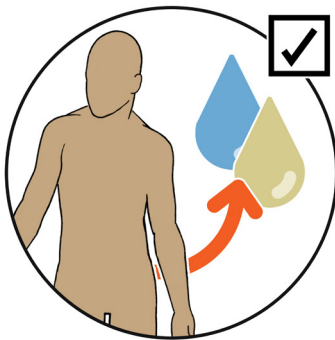
More ways to stay healthy:

- Keep active and move as much as possible.  
Kidney disease makes your muscles weak, so it is important to keep moving to keep them strong.
- Stop smoking.
- Do all of your dialysis sessions as your kidney team has told you to.
- Try to stay at a healthy weight.
- Stop drinking alcohol or drink less alcohol.

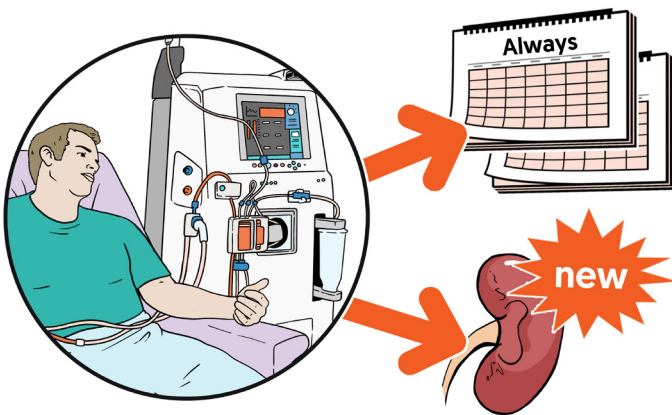
## Will dialysis fix the damage to my kidneys?



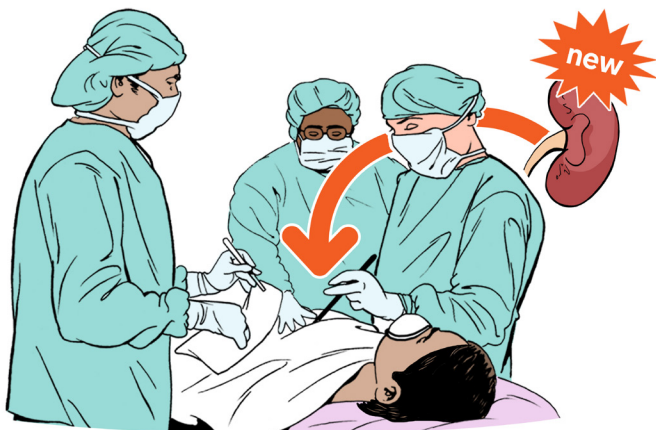
If you have chronic kidney disease (CKD), the damage to your kidneys can not be repaired.



Dialysis does the job of healthy kidneys by removing waste and fluids from your body, but it will not cure your CKD.

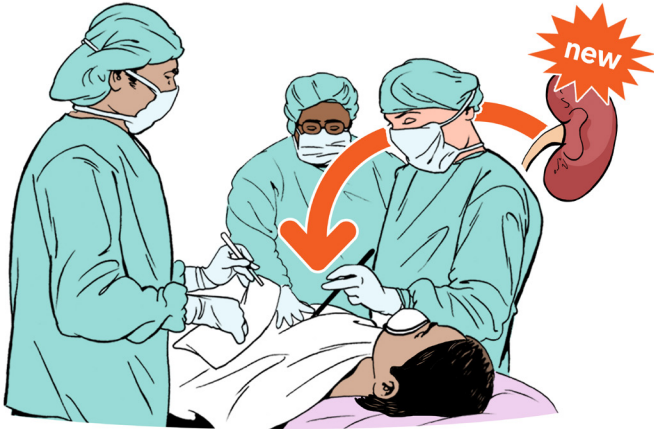


Once you start dialysis you will need to keep doing it for the rest of your life, or until you have a **kidney transplant**.



A **kidney transplant** is an operation where doctors put a healthy kidney from someone else into a person with kidney failure. Someone who gives one of their kidneys to someone else is called a donor.

# Is dialysis the only treatment for kidney disease?



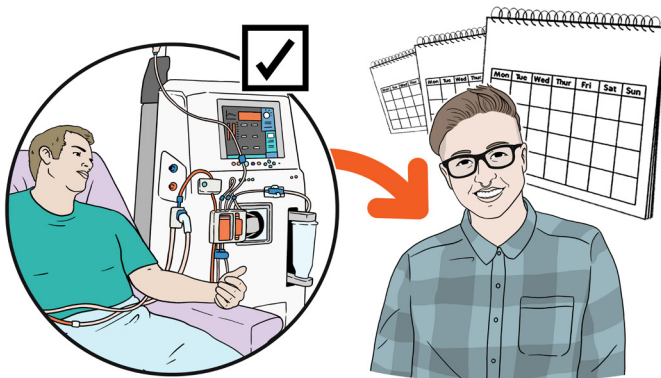
Other treatments for kidney disease are:

- A kidney transplant



- **Conservative care or supportive care**

This is care to manage the symptoms of kidney disease and keep your kidneys working for as long as possible without dialysis.



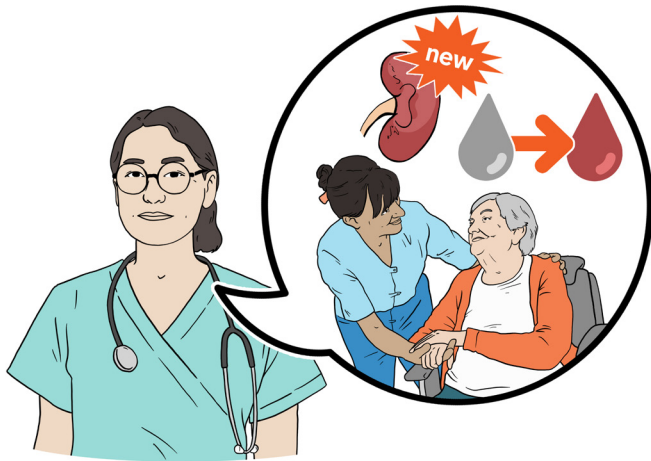
Dialysis can help to keep most people alive for longer and give them a better **quality of life**.



Good **quality of life** is about being able to enjoy your life and to do things that help you to feel happy and well, like seeing friends or doing hobbies.



Dialysis does not help everyone. People who are very old or have serious health issues may not be helped by dialysis.



Your kidney team will give you support and advice to help you understand your treatment options.

## More information



Kidney Care UK has information about kidney health here:

**[www.kidneycareuk.org/about-kidney-health](http://www.kidneycareuk.org/about-kidney-health)**



The NHS has information about chronic kidney disease (CKD) here:

**[www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease)**

This easy read booklet uses simple language and pictures to tell you about dialysis. It has been made by Kidney Care UK, working with CHANGE.

CHANGE is a disability rights charity and accessible information expert.

Kidney Care UK is a support charity for kidney patients and their families. Contact us for advice and information on the free help that we offer.



Visit our website at: **[kidneycareuk.org](https://kidneycareuk.org)**



Email us at: **[support@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:support@kidneycareuk.org)**



Phone us at: **0808 801 00 00**



In partnership with



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