

Managing Your Health: End Stage Renal Disease

Your Guide to Getting Started and Staying on Track

Understanding End Stage Renal Disease

An End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) diagnosis means your kidneys are functioning at less than 10-15% of their normal ability. This can lead to the build-up of waste and fluid in the body, which needs to be managed to keep you as healthy as possible. While ESRD requires ongoing care, with the right treatment and support, you can take steps to manage your health well.

Steps to Take After a Diagnosis

1. Learn About Treatment Options

There are two main treatments for ESRD: dialysis and kidney transplant. Your doctor will work with you to determine the best option based on your health, lifestyle, and preferences.

- Dialysis: This process helps remove waste and excess fluids from your blood. There are two main types of dialysis:
 - Hemodialysis (usually performed at a dialysis center).
 - Peritoneal Dialysis (usually done at home, allowing more flexibility).
- Kidney Transplant: For those who are eligible, a kidney transplant can provide a long-term solution without the need for dialysis. After a transplant, it's essential to take all prescribed medications and follow your care team's guidance to protect your new kidney.

2. Maintain Regular Checkups

ESRD requires close monitoring to manage symptoms and adjust treatments as needed. Keep regular appointments with your health care team to monitor kidney function and overall health.

3. Managing Medications

You may be prescribed medications to help manage symptoms, reduce complications, or support dialysis. These might include blood pressure medicines, phosphate binders, and vitamins. Take them as directed and discuss any side effects with your doctor.

4. Make Lifestyle Changes

- Follow a Kidney-Friendly Diet: To help manage your condition, you'll likely need to limit certain nutrients, like sodium, potassium, and phosphorus. A renal dietitian can help you develop a meal plan that works for you.
- Stay Active: Light to moderate physical activity, like walking or gentle stretching, can help improve your energy levels and overall well-being.
- Limit Fluid Intake: Depending on your condition and treatment plan, you may need to restrict fluid intake to prevent excess fluid buildup.

5. Know When to Seek Help

Some symptoms, such as swelling, shortness of breath, or changes in urine output, may indicate complications. Contact your provider if you experience these symptoms, so you can address issues before they worsen.

Connecting with Your Care Team

Managing ESRD requires a team approach, and you are an essential part of that team. Besides your primary doctor, your care team may include nephrologists, dialysis technicians, dietitians, and social workers—each committed to working together to keep you healthier. Staying engaged and asking questions will help you get the support you need.

Taking Charge of Your Health

Managing ESRD may feel overwhelming at times, but each step you take can improve your quality of life. Follow your care plan, stay connected with your care team, and know that support is available for every part of this journey.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Am I experiencing any transportation issues getting to or from dialysis?
- Have I missed a dialysis session in the last 7 days?
- Is my blood pressure high after dialysis (systolic over 180 mmHg)?
- Do I feel dizzy after my dialysis sessions?

If you answered yes to any of these, talk to your care team—they can help you find solutions and stay on track with your care.

Resources and Support

Living with ESRD can be challenging, but you don't have to navigate it alone. Support groups, educational materials, and care programs are available to help. Ask your care team for resources to guide you, follow your care plan, and stay connected—each step you take can improve your quality of life.

Call the Concierge team at 713-442-4878 (TTY: 711). From October 1 through March 31, hours are 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week. From April 1 through September 30, hours are 8 am to 8 pm, Monday through Friday. Messaging services are used on weekends, after hours, and on federal holidays. KelseyCare Advantage, a product of KS Plan Administrators, LLC, is an HMO and POS Medicare Advantage plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in KelseyCare Advantage depends on contract renewal. © 2025 KelseyCare Advantage. All rights reserved. H0332_FLYDISST-ESRD25_C