

# Home dialysis – your questions answered



Some people have the equipment in their bedroom. Other people prefer to use a spare room with a reclining chair that we can provide.

# Home dialysis

As a kidney patient at Guy's and St Thomas' you will have been given some information about the different treatment options including haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. The aim of this leaflet is to explain more about self-care and home dialysis.

## What does home dialysis mean?

- It means doing either haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis yourself at home
- Some people find it helpful to have a partner or friend to help with the dialysis but this is not essential.

## What are the different types of home dialysis?

### Home haemodialysis

If you are interested in doing haemodialysis at home you need to be willing and able to learn how to do your own treatment. Some people have support from family, friends or carers to assist them, while some patients manage independently. The most important thing is to work with the home dialysis team to find the best solution for you.



You will also need to have enough space at home to carry out the dialysis and store the supplies. The home dialysis nurse will arrange to visit you at home together with one of our technicians to ensure that your accommodation is suitable.

Some adaptations will need to be made to your home to accommodate the equipment. The home dialysis nurse and technician will explain more about this when they visit. Guy's and St Thomas' will fund this work and it usually takes one to four days.

We will provide the dialysis machine and most of the equipment. You may need to provide small items such as a table. The dialysis supplies will be delivered to your home every two to eight weeks depending on how much storage space is available. Someone needs to be available to sign for the delivery. If you are unlikely to be at home during the day, please let us know so that we can discuss alternative arrangements.

The home dialysis machine will be smaller than the ones you will have seen in the dialysis units. The home dialysis team will advise on what machine will suit you best depending on your medical and social needs.



When dialysing at home we encourage you to choose a treatment plan that meets your medical needs and also fits around your work and social activities. Here are some examples:

- dialysis four days a week for four hours
- dialysis five days a week for three hours
- dialysis six days a week for eight hours overnight (nocturnal home haemodialysis).

You will notice we encourage you to dialyse more often than you would in a dialysis unit. This is because home dialysis patients report feeling better and evidence from research indicates that doing more dialysis results in an improved sense of well being, better blood pressure control and fewer dietary and fluid restrictions. Dialysing at home allows you to be flexible with your dialysis treatment plan and allows you to dialyse for longer. Our home dialysis team will discuss this with you in more detail.

We have two pathways for learning how to do your own haemodialysis:

1. We can arrange for you to have your dialysis and start your learning in the home training area in:

**The Borough Kidney Treatment Centre**

46 Long Lane  
London SE1 4AU

or at

**The Tunbridge Wells Kidney Treatment Centre**

7-15 St John's Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN4 9TF

The teaching will be done at your own pace by the home dialysis nurses. This usually takes four to 12 weeks.

2. Alternatively you can learn how to self-care in a dialysis unit first before moving to the home training area. The teaching will be done at your own pace by the nurses in your local dialysis unit.



## Peritoneal dialysis

There are two types of PD: Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) and Automated Peritoneal Dialysis (APD).

- **CAPD** – exchanging fluid four times a day by hand.

**Continuous** – means you are dialysing all the time.

**Ambulatory** – between exchanges of dialysis fluid you can carry out your everyday activities.

**Peritoneal** – using the peritoneal cavity.

**Dialysis** – the process by which waste products and fluid are removed from your body.



Photographs courtesy of Baxter Healthcare Ltd

- **APD** – exchanging fluid during the night using a machine.

**Automated** – a machine performs the exchanges overnight while you sleep.

**Peritoneal** – using the peritoneal cavity.

**Dialysis** – the process by which waste products and fluid are removed from your body.



If you are interested in doing CAPD or APD at home you need to be willing and able to learn how to do your own treatment or identify someone who can help you. In some situations we can arrange for someone to assist you with APD.

To have CAPD or APD at home you will need to have enough space to carry out the dialysis and store the supplies. The home dialysis nurse can discuss the space requirements with you.

We will provide the dialysis machine (for APD) and most of the equipment. You may need to provide small items such as a table. The dialysis fluids and other supplies will be delivered to your home every two to four weeks depending on how much storage space is available.

We have two pathways for learning how to do your own peritoneal dialysis:

1. We can arrange for you to have your learning in the home training area in:

**The Borough Kidney Treatment Centre**

46 Long Lane  
London SE1 4AU

The teaching will be done at your own pace by the home dialysis nurses. This usually takes four to five days.

2. Alternatively you can attend a training centre. The teaching will be done at your own pace by the staff in the training centre. This usually takes four to five days.

In the future we hope to be able to offer peritoneal dialysis training at The Tunbridge Wells Kidney Treatment Centre.



Please note that some people are not suitable for peritoneal dialysis (PD). For example PD may not be possible if you have had major surgery on your abdomen (tummy) or have bowel disease such as diverticulitis, colitis or are very overweight or malnourished. Please talk to the home dialysis team for further details.

## What are the benefits of home dialysis?

- You will not need to travel to the hospital for dialysis
- You can be more independent
- You will have more flexibility to fit dialysis around work, family and leisure time
- You can do dialysis for longer or more often – this will benefit your health, and give you more flexibility in what you can eat and drink.



## Can anyone do dialysis at home?

- You need to be willing and able to learn how to do your own treatment. Some people have a helper or carer to assist them. This may be a family member or friend
- You need to have some space at home to do the dialysis and store the supplies.

## What support will I have if I do my dialysis at home?

- You will be able to contact technical and nursing staff if you have any queries about your dialysis. Details will be provided during the training period
- The home dialysis teams also visit to provide support and monitor your condition on a regular basis
- You will have consultant clinic reviews, every three months, at one of our Kidney Treatment Centres.

## Can I go on holiday?

You need to check with your kidney care team to ensure that you are fit enough to travel. You should do this approximately two months before you plan to go away.

### Haemodialysis

Once you have chosen your destination, find out where the nearest dialysis unit is located and contact them to request dialysis on your preferred dates. At an NHS dialysis unit you can have an unlimited number of holiday dialysis sessions per year free of charge.

In a private (non NHS) unit in the UK you may have an unlimited number of haemodialysis sessions free of charge as long as the private unit has an agreement with NHS England. You should check this before booking treatment with them.

Dialysis units in countries within the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland may accept the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which entitles you to holiday haemodialysis free of charge. Some countries ask for a co-payment, if so, you will be liable for this cost. If the dialysis unit is not a state-provided unit you will need to pay for the haemodialysis treatment sessions yourself. However you

can apply for a partial or full refund.

If you wish to travel to a non EEA country, you will need to check whether or not the country has a reciprocal healthcare agreement with the UK. If they do not have a reciprocal healthcare agreement, you will have to pay for the entire cost of your treatment(s) yourself.

For haemodialysis on a cruise ship, providing the cruise is within the boundaries of, or the majority of the ports of call are to an EEA country or a country with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement, you can be reimbursed up to the cost of an NHS haemodialysis treatment.

It is possible to take a small transportable haemodialysis machine away for use on holiday providing you have received the appropriate training. Please ask the home dialysis team for more information.

For more information please ask for a copy of our **Dialysis away from base** leaflet.

### **Peritoneal dialysis**

Using CAPD usually means you can continue to go away for days out and on holiday. An exchange can be done in any clean environment with a sink. If you are planning a holiday we can make arrangements for your fluid to be sent to where you are staying in the UK. It is also possible to holiday abroad but there are some countries where the fluid cannot be easily supplied.

An APD machine is transportable and can be taken on holiday. We can arrange for the fluid to be delivered as above. Alternatively you can swap onto CAPD for the duration of your holiday. CAPD is preferable if you are planning a cruise as supplies cannot be delivered at sea.

**Please talk to the home dialysis team before booking a holiday.**

## Where can I find more information?

- For more information about home dialysis please contact the home dialysis team:  
t: 020 7188 5191 or 020 7188 5133
- There is more information about dialysis at home and self-care in the film **Living life to the full on dialysis**, ask your kidney care team for a copy of the DVD or watch online at: [www.mykidney.org.uk](http://www.mykidney.org.uk)
- Our kidney website provides more information about living with kidney disease:  
[www.mykidney.org.uk](http://www.mykidney.org.uk)

## Contact us

For more information about our services visit the Trust website [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

### **Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust**

St Thomas' Hospital  
Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH

Guy's Hospital  
Great Maze Pond, London SE1 9RT

**Switchboard: 020 7188 7188**

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