

## Independent nocturnal dialysis A patient's perspective

Three nights a week 55-year-old dialysis patient Kathy Denamy arrives at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) with her pyjamas, ready for a full night of dialysis while she sleeps.

Kathy is a participant in the BC Renal Agency-supported nocturnal hemodialysis program at VGH. The program, believed to be the first of its kind in North America, lets her manage her own dialysis through the night, so that she can be ready for her work as a bookkeeper first thing the following morning.



“I find this dialysis fits better with my lifestyle than the daytime dialysis,” says Kathy. “It gives me more energy and more freedom.”

Kathy first started dialysis in 2007 following ten years of chronic kidney disease. After six months of conventional treatment at the Nanaimo community unit, she trained for home hemodialysis (HHD) and then began a year of dialysing in her home. But after losing her job in Nanaimo she decided to return to the Lower Mainland.

Moving into her daughter’s house in Surrey meant she didn’t have the space needed for the home hemodialysis equipment and supplies, so Kathy returned to conventional hemodialysis three days a week. She noticed an immediate difference in her energy levels, and found she always felt tired. She reduced her hours of work to allow time for rest in the afternoons, but fewer working hours meant reduced earnings – something she could ill afford.

“I’m a single person and I need to work to support myself,” says Kathy. Eventually a nurse told her about the nocturnal program at VGH, which provided the solution she was looking for.

“After nocturnal dialysis I find I have more energy and can last the whole day, so it allows me to do full-time work,” says Kathy.

A key benefit of nocturnal dialysis is the additional hours of treatment the patient receives, resulting in improved health outcomes and quality of life. A patient who dialyzes at a unit during the day typically receives a maximum of 12 hours of dialysis per week, versus 21-30 hours for a nocturnal dialysis patient.