

## Module 2 – Physical Assessment

Before you begin your dialysis treatment you will be instructed to do a self-assessment. Your assessment will be recorded on your run log before each dialysis. This will help your care team assess your health status.

A self-assessment includes:

- Weight
- Blood pressure (BP)
- Temperature

### Weight

There are 3 types of weights to be aware of for dialysis:

- Body weight
- Fluid weight
- Goal weight

#### Body weight

Your body weight consists of solid things in your body such as bones, muscles and fat. Body weight is what increases when you eat too much or decreases when you eat too little. Your body weight should stay about the same every day, unless you start eating more or less than usual.



**Important tip to remember:**

Your body weight shouldn't change much from day to day.

## Fluid weight

Fluid weight is the part of your body that is liquid. Your body tissues and blood contain fluid. For people with kidney disease, fluid weight will increase as you drink more, for example. If you drink 1 liter of water, you will gain 1 kg of fluid. If you do not urinate, the fluid will stay in your body and you may start to notice swelling in some places.

**Did you KNOW?** 1 litre of fluid = 1 kilogram (kg) of fluid

## Check for signs of swelling or edema

Swelling or **edema** means you have too much fluid in your body. If excess fluid builds up in your blood stream it may leak into your tissues which causes swelling (edema).



### Look for signs of swelling around your ankles, fingers and eyes.

Are your shoes and socks tight? Do you see dents or finger marks in your skin when you push on your ankles?

You will be given guidelines on how much fluid you can have. Your fluid limit depends on how much urine your kidneys are still making and if edema or excess fluid weight is a problem for you. You will get used to recognizing when you need to drink more or less. Your nurse and dietitian will help you learn how much fluid you may drink.

## What is Goal Weight?

Goal weight is similar to body weight. This is the weight at which you feel well, with no shortness of breath or swelling in the ankles, and your blood pressure is within your normal range. This is the weight you should be at the end of dialysis.

To determine the amount of fluid to remove on dialysis, your home hemodialysis team will determine a goal weight that is right for you. Your goal weight usually remains the same every day, but may need to be adjusted if you gain or lose body weight.

Did you  
**KNOW?**

### Goal weight is also known as:

- Target weight
- Dry weight
- Ideal weight
- Normal weight



**My Goal Weight is:**

\_\_\_\_\_ lbs

\_\_\_\_\_ kgs

## Determining the fluid weight to be removed on dialysis

Pre-weight (today's scale reading): \_\_\_\_\_

Goal weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtract the two weights = \_\_\_\_\_

**This is the fluid weight.**



**If you are planning to drink on dialysis, you will need to enter the fluid amount into the final number.**

Examples:

- 1 cup of coffee is 200 mls or 0.2 of a litre
- 1 bottle of water is approximately 300mls or 0.3 of a litre
- 1 can of soda is 355mls or 400mls or 0.4 of a litre



**Did you KNOW?** 1 litre of fluid = 1 kilogram (kg) of fluid

**Final Fluid Calculation:**

Pre-dialysis weight (scale weight) \_\_\_\_\_

Goal weight - \_\_\_\_\_

Subtract the two weights = \_\_\_\_\_

Add the fluid you will drink + \_\_\_\_\_

Add rinse back + \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to remove on dialysis = \_\_\_\_\_

Here is an example:

Today's pre-dialysis weight \_\_\_\_\_ 65.5 kg \_\_\_\_\_

Goal weight - \_\_\_\_\_ 63.5 kg \_\_\_\_\_

Subtract the two weights = \_\_\_\_\_ 2.0 kg \_\_\_\_\_

Add drinks + \_\_\_\_\_ 0.2 kg \_\_\_\_\_

Add rinse back + \_\_\_\_\_ 0.3 kg \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to remove on dialysis = \_\_\_\_\_ 2.5 litres → This is the number you will put into your machine for fluid removal.

## **What does it mean when you are above your goal weight?**

This may be a sign that you have too much fluid in your body. This is called fluid overload and may be a result of:

- Increased fluid
- Increased salt intake (salt makes you retain fluid)
- Incorrect calculations when removing fluid on dialysis

## **How will you notice if you have too much fluid in your body?**

You will notice:

- An increase in your weight
- Higher than normal blood pressure
- Swelling in your ankles, hands or face, shortness of breath.

## **What if I lose weight?**

If you lose weight it may be because you are losing muscle or fat weight. You may need to adjust your goal weight, as you have lost true body weight. You may start to collect fluid in your body if you have lost weight but not adjusted your goal weight.

## **When you know you have too much fluid in your body, follow these steps:**

- Lower your goal weight by 0.5 kg
- Decrease your fluid and salt intake
- Consult your dialysis nurse or dietitian for guidance as needed

## **What if I gain weight?**

If you gain weight it may be because you are eating more or building muscle. You have gained true body weight. You may have low blood pressure and feel unwell at the end of dialysis if you continue using your previous goal weight without making adjustments.

## When you know you have gained weight follow these steps:

- Increase goal weight by 0.5kg
- Evaluate your food intake and caloric needs
- Consult with your dialysis nurse or dietician for guidance

## Blood pressure



**Blood pressure is an important tool to help determine if you have too much or too little fluid in your body.**

Imagine a water pipe with little stream flowing through it and the pressure of the pipe is low. If there was a sudden gush of fluid into the pipe, and the pipe fills up, the water would have nowhere to go and the water pressure in the pipe would increase. This same thing happens in your blood vessels when you have too much fluid in your blood. As the fluid builds up in your vessels, so does the pressure, as in high blood pressure or ***hypertension***.

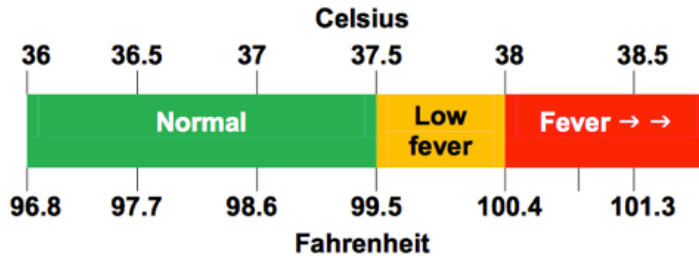
If there was too little water flowing through the same pipe, there would be a low water pressure or a trickle of water. This same thing happens in your blood vessels when you have too little fluid in your blood. If your blood pressure is low, you may be dehydrated. This is known as low blood pressure or ***hypotension***.

## Temperature

A temperature above normal is a sign of infection. It is important to track your temperature before and after dialysis and anytime you feel warm, chills or you think you may have a fever. Temperature is an important tool to help you determine if you have an infection starting. If this occurs while you are dialyzing, you must call your nurse immediately as this could indicate a serious blood infection.

## What temperature indicates a fever?

Look at the photo below.



The green section indicates normal body temperature.

**Normal Temperature = 36 to 37.5°C**



**If your temperature is higher than 37.5°C, please call your nurse immediately.**

Sometimes a fever is masked by drinking cold beverages, eating ice, or taking certain medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol and others), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and aspirin. Please be aware of this when checking your temperature.

Even if the temperature reading is within the normal range, you may feel general malaise (feeling unwell, flu like symptoms). If you feel that you may have a fever, take a look at your vascular access. Your fistula or catheter may be red or irritated. Your nurse may ask you to go to the closest emergency for further assessment.

