

Dialysis Options in BC



A guide to making the
treatment choice that is
right for you





In British Columbia, patients have many options when it comes to their dialysis care.



The photos in this brochure feature kidney patients in British Columbia. The BC Renal Agency would like to thank the patients and their families for their contribution.

Photos by William Jans/WJR Photo



This brochure is a starting point for you to think about which dialysis option would work best for you and your family. It also explains why being actively involved in your own care is so important. We encourage you to meet with your kidney doctor and care team to discuss your options in more detail.

What is Dialysis?



Dialysis is a treatment that replaces some of the functions of a healthy kidney. It is needed when your kidneys don't work well enough to keep you healthy. As well as being a life saving treatment, it is also a life changing treatment. That's because it impacts so many aspects of day-to-day life.

There are two kinds of dialysis - peritoneal and hemodialysis - and there are different ways to receive both types of care.

HEMODIALYSIS

Hemodialysis happens when the patient's blood is passed through an artificial kidney, which is called a **dialyzer**. This dialyzer takes out waste products and fluids. Some patients need hemodialysis care that can only be provided in a hospital dialysis unit. If your dialysis is stable, you may transfer to another place to receive your hemodialysis. You may move to a community dialysis unit, an "independent" dialysis unit or do dialysis at home. The BC Renal Agency website has a list of BC hemodialysis units: www.bcrenalagency.ca

PERITONEAL DIALYSIS

Peritoneal dialysis happens when the blood is cleaned inside the body. The peritoneal membrane acts as a filter. Peritoneal dialysis is done at home with the option of dialyzing during the day or at night.



In BC, a growing number of patients manage their dialysis care on their own. Research clearly shows the more involved patients are in their own care, the better the results.

Positive benefits can include:

- a more flexible schedule
- better health results
- the ability to return to work
- the option to travel and the list goes on...

Refer to page 8 for more information.

Good health begins at home



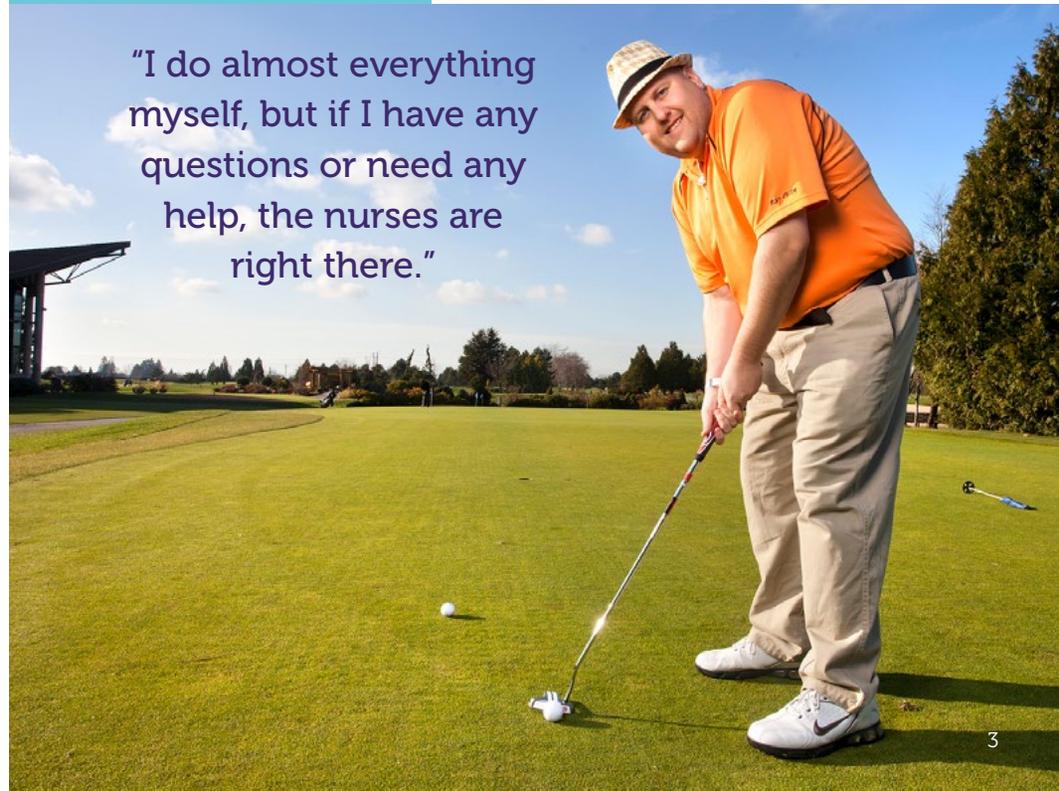
"I don't enjoy dialysis, but since doing my dialysis at home I am much more content."

Some of the benefits of managing your own dialysis care are reflected in the words below, from BC kidney patients:

"I feel like I have my life back. My days are free."



"I do almost everything myself, but if I have any questions or need any help, the nurses are right there."





Support is Available

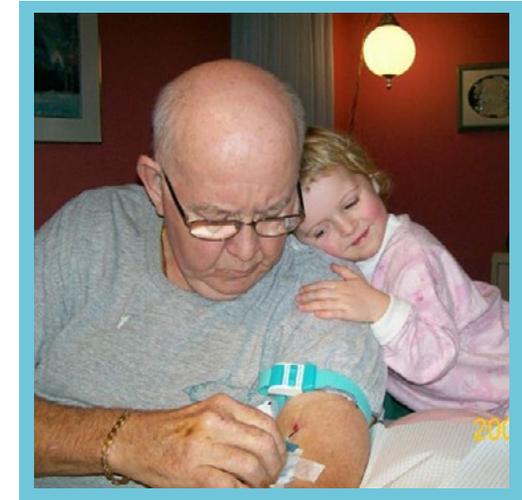
Some patients dialyze at a unit with minimal help and supervision. As well, many programs support their patients at different stages. For example, one patient may take his blood pressure and weight. Another may do that, as well as set up her dialysis machine or perhaps even needle herself. Your kidney care team will support you in being as active as possible in your care. This might begin with changes to your diet and how you manage your medications. It could then extend to you learning how to manage your dialysis on your own. At each step, the team is available to help you achieve your goals.



Managing Your Treatment

Training, ongoing contact and support are the keys to your success.

Home dialysis training programs are available across the province. How long you train varies with the type of dialysis, what kind of learner you are, and if you want a partner to also learn.



Once you and your training nurse feel confident in your ability to do home dialysis, there is a lot of support available. This includes regular clinic visits with the kidney doctor and care team, and follow up phone calls or emails. Additionally, the BC home program provides technical help if needed, including phone calls and technicians coming to you (for home hemodialysis).





So much
to think about...

How do I know what's right for me?

Dialysis will play a large role in your life. That's why it's important to choose a treatment that fits your lifestyle and personality, as well as your medical needs.

To help you with this process, we encourage you to think about the questions on page 7 and review the table on page 8, which includes more specific details.

Talk it over with those close to you. Hear what other patients have to say by checking out the videos on the BC Renal Agency website at bcrenalagency.ca. And talk to your kidney doctor and care team. Their goal is to help you make the right decision for you and your family.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR DIALYSIS DECISION

Before reading on, you may want to take a few minutes to think about what activities are important to you. What type of lifestyle do you prefer? For example:

- Is it important for you to have a flexible schedule?
- Is your life full of commitments such as paid work, volunteering, family?
- Are you always on the go? Do you lead a quiet lifestyle? Are you physically active?
- How do you spend your recreational time?
- Are you a decision maker?
- Are you comfortable taking an active role in your care?
- Would you be able to alter your schedule so you could attend dialysis training sessions?
- Do you drive or have access to transit/HandyDART to get to and from the dialysis unit for treatment several times a week?

What about the cost?

Kidney patients in BC are fortunate to have little or no costs related to dialysis and related medications. For peritoneal and home hemodialysis patients, all training equipment and supplies, supply delivery and home technical support costs are covered. The same applies to costs for renovations needed for plumbing and electrical changes to support home hemodialysis. Of note, if you pursue home hemodialysis, there could be potential costs for increased water, sewer and power usage. However, the costs of travelling to a dialysis unit three times per week (gas or HandyDART, parking, and meals) are most likely higher. All transportation costs are the responsibility of the patient – regardless of the type of dialysis.

Dialysis Options at a Glance

	Peritoneal Dialysis	Home Hemodialysis	Hospital and Community Unit Dialysis*	
Lifestyle	Flexibility of when you dialyze - it can suit your schedule	yes	yes	no
	Puts you in charge	yes	yes	no
	Portable, so you can travel	yes	sometimes	no
	Diet and fluid intake flexibility	yes	yes	no
	Need to travel 3 times per week for dialysis	no	no	yes
Clinical	Get more dialysis, which means you feel better	yes	yes	no
	Needle-free treatments	yes	no	no
	Strong support network of clinic nurses, dietitians, social workers and nephrologists	yes	yes	yes
	Potential reduction in some medications	yes	yes	no
	Permanent catheter in the abdomen	yes	no	no
Your Role	Vascular access surgery	no	yes	yes
	Space required to store supplies	yes	yes	no
	You order supplies and accept home deliveries	yes	yes	no
	Requires several weeks of training	yes	yes	no
	Assessment of sewer/septic system needed	no	sometimes	no
Financial	Taught to needle vascular access	no	yes	no
	Telephone in room needed	sometimes	yes	no
	You set up and monitor your dialysis	yes	yes	no
Financial	Cost of supplies and delivery covered	yes	yes	yes
	Possible home electrical and plumbing upgrades needed (costs covered by program)	no	sometimes	no

The BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, plans and monitors the delivery of province-wide kidney care services.

* Patients often transition from hospital-based dialysis to a community unit. Patients are encouraged and supported to become more involved in their care if they are able. Some patients who dialyze at a facility decide to receive training to manage their care at home – either through peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis.

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