



Choosing the Right Dialysis Type Part 1: What are my options?

Dialysis isn't always easy and at times it can be intimidating. This guide can help you and your loved ones learn about the different dialysis options. While we know it is hard, Healthmap is here to help.

Why do I need to make a decision now?

Once you have been diagnosed with kidney disease, it is important to have a plan and think about the best dialysis option for you because kidney disease can lead to kidney failure. When a decision is not made ahead of time, people are often hospitalized for kidney failure and are less able to voice their choice. Our goal is to help you make a plan, stay healthy, and make sure your voice is heard.

Do people with kidney disease have symptoms?

People with advanced kidney disease often have symptoms related to extra water and waste in their bodies. These problems tend to get worse over time, so you might have gotten used to some of them. Sometimes it helps to think back to a year ago to compare how you felt then, to now. These symptoms might include:



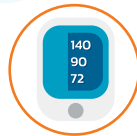
Feeling nauseous, throwing up, or having a “funny taste” in your mouth when eating (like the taste of metal)



Having trouble breathing (especially when moving around or laying flat in bed)



Feeling tired



Trouble controlling your blood pressure



Losing weight and not feeling hungry



Trouble with memory or focus



Swollen legs or leg cramps



Itchiness



Sleep problems



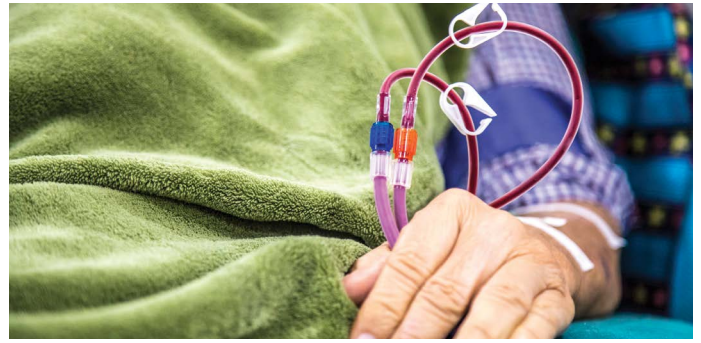
Muscle or joint pain

What are my choices?

There are two options for those with kidney failure: transplant or dialysis. Many people prefer to have a kidney transplant, but most patients must choose a dialysis type because the waiting list for a transplant is very long, sometimes up to 5 years, and some patients cannot get a transplant because of other illnesses or advanced age.

There is a third option called “conservative care” or “palliative care.” This means a person does not want dialysis or a transplant and understands that their kidneys will fail. Doctors will help keep the person safe and comfortable until this happens. If you are interested in this option, talk to your doctor.

WHAT IS DIALYSIS? Dialysis is a procedure that replaces the job of the kidneys when they are no longer working. Dialysis cleans your blood and removes extra water and waste, functioning just like a healthy kidney would. There are two types of dialysis:



Peritoneal Dialysis – a natural layer in the abdomen (or belly) called the “peritoneal membrane” is used as a filter to clean your blood and remove extra water.

Hemodialysis – blood is removed from the body and passed through a filter which removes extra water and waste products. Blood is then returned to the body.

Are there benefits to doing dialysis at home vs. in a center?

Yes! While dialysis at home may take place more often or over longer periods of time, the process is more similar to how your kidneys work (remember, they work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!). This means less water and waste builds up between treatments. When compared to dialysis done in a center, home dialysis leads to:



- **Better health outcomes** (including better blood pressure control and a higher chance of living longer)
- **More freedom to choose when you have treatments**, giving you more free time to allow for a normal day (which may include time with friends, family, or hobbies)
- **Faster recovery times** (meaning you may not feel as tired)
- **Better energy levels and quality of life**
- Needing to take **fewer medications**
- **More freedom in your diet** (meaning you may not need to avoid certain types of food)
- **Greater likelihood of being able to work and travel**
- **Higher chance** of receiving a kidney transplant

To learn more, please call Healthmap Solutions at 1-800-481-0474.

Content adapted from: Funderup et al. *BMJ Open*. 2019.

Benefits of home dialysis retrieved from:

- Francois K, Bargman JM. Evaluating the benefits of home-based peritoneal dialysis. *Int J Nephrol Renovasc Dis*, 2014.
- Walker RC, Howard K, Morton RL. Home Hemodialysis: A Comprehensive Review of Patient-Centered and Economic Considerations. *Clinicoecon Outcomes Res*, 2017.

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