

First hemodialysis treatment checklist

A simple checklist to help you get ready for your first in-center treatment.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

Here are some things people often bring to their first treatment. Not every clinic requires all of these, so check with your dialysis center if you're not sure.

- ☐ Photo identification
- ☐ Insurance information, if your clinic asked you to bring it
- ☐ A current list of your medications
- ☐ Emergency contact information
- ☐ Any paperwork your dialysis center asked you to bring
- ☐ Comfortable clothing that allows staff to reach your vascular access
- ☐ Glasses or hearing aids, if you normally use them
- ☐ Your phone and charger
- ☐ Something to help pass the time
- ☐ Your questions (see the list below)

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TREATMENT

- ☐ Who should I contact if I have a question after treatment?
- ☐ Who is part of my dialysis care team?
- ☐ How long is my scheduled treatment?
- ☐ What should I bring on a regular basis?
- ☐ What are the clinic's rules about food, drinks, visitors, phones, blankets, or other electronics?
- ☐ What should I do if I am running late or cannot make a treatment?

OTHER QUESTIONS

Important

Always follow your dialysis clinic's instructions and your care team's guidance. They are there to help and support you throughout treatment.

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Words you may hear, and a few reminders for after your treatment.

THINGS I MAY HEAR

Your care team may use words that are new to you. Here are a few you might hear. For fuller explanations, see the Dialysis Terms Quick Reference.

Pre-treatment weight

Your weight taken before dialysis begins.

Post-treatment weight

Your weight taken after dialysis ends.

Target weight / dry weight

The weight your care team uses as a guide for how much fluid to remove. Your care team sets it and may change it over time.

Ultrafiltration (UF)

The removal of extra fluid from your blood during treatment.

Arterial line

The tubing that carries blood from your body to the dialyzer.

Venous line

The tubing that carries blood from the dialyzer back to your body.

Blood pump

The part of the dialysis machine that moves your blood through the tubing and dialyzer.

Rinse-back

The step near the end of treatment when the blood in the tubing and dialyzer is returned to you.

Vascular access

The way your blood is reached for dialysis, such as a fistula, graft, or catheter.

Bruit

The sound of blood flowing through a fistula or graft. Your care team may listen for it with a stethoscope.

AFTER TREATMENT

- ☐ Write down any questions that came up during treatment.
- ☐ Save your clinic's contact information somewhere easy to find.
- ☐ Follow your care team's instructions for caring for your vascular access.
- ☐ If something feels unfamiliar or concerning, ask your care team rather than assuming it's normal.

One practical suggestion

The first few weeks of dialysis can bring a lot of new information. You do not need to memorize all of it. Keep a note on your phone, or use the Treatment Day Notes & Questions Log, to record unfamiliar terms and questions between treatments.