

Kidney Disease and Dialysis

Kidney Disease

What is kidney disease?

Your kidneys clean waste from your blood. Wastes in your blood come from the normal breakdown of tissues and from food you eat. If your kidneys do not get rid of these wastes, they build up in the blood and hurt your body. Kidney disease happens when the tiny structures inside your kidneys, that clean blood, are damaged.

How can a disaster affect my health if I have kidney disease?

Permanent kidney failure is called end-stage renal disease (ESRD). If your kidneys stop working completely, your body fills with extra water and waste. This is called uremia. Your hands and feet may swell up and you may feel tired and weak because your body needs clean blood to work the right way. Untreated uremia may lead to seizures or coma and will in time lead to death. If your kidneys stop working completely, you will need to go through dialysis or kidney transplantation.

What can I do during a disaster to protect my health?

There are some dietary tips you can follow to help lower your risk of kidney problems during a disaster:

- Reduce protein intake
- Reduce salt intake
- Reduce water intake
- Avoid food high in potassium (bananas, oranges, nuts and potatoes)
- Reduce phosphorus intake (eggs, beans, cola drinks, and dairy products)
- Avoid drinking a lot of dark carbonated and caffeinated drinks
- Check for any swelling on your body

A non-dietary way to help lower the risk of problems from kidney disease is to avoid holding your urine for a long time.

Dialysis

Dialysis

What is dialysis?

You need dialysis if your kidneys no longer take away enough wastes and fluid from your blood to keep you healthy. There are two major forms of dialysis: hemodialysis and peritoneal.

- In hemodialysis, your blood is sent through a machine that takes away waste and the clean blood is returned to your body.

- In peritoneal dialysis, a fluid is put into your abdomen to catch the waste from your blood.

How can a disaster affect my dialysis treatments?

You can increase your risk of problems by not following your treatment plan. Problems include high blood pressure, heart problems, kidney problems, a need for dialysis or a kidney transplant.

What can I do during a disaster to protect my health?

It is important to continue treatment, even during a disaster. If you can't get your regular dialysis treatment due to extreme weather or any other emergency, remember to follow diet changes, which you should have talked about with your doctor. Following the diet to lower the risk of high blood pressure, shortness of breath or high potassium levels that could cause your heart to stop. You should follow the diet only for the time that is needed until your dialysis treatments can start again.

Medical and Dietary Information for Kidney Disease/Dialysis

Along with the [emergency kit](#) and [emergency plan](#) remember the following tips:

- Wear a medical ID bracelet to identify your condition and allergies
- Have a copy of your dialysis treatment plan
- Know the emergency preparedness plan of your dialysis unit
- Make sure your dialysis unit can easily contact you in case of an emergency
- Hospitals may not be able to give you dialysis treatments
- Have a back-up dialysis unit planned in case of an emergency
- Have a list of your medical history with all of your dialysis information
- Have a back-up transportation plan to your dialysis unit in case of an emergency

Also pay attention to the weather forecasts. If a weather event is coming, like a snow storm, try to get your dialysis treatment before the storm hits.