



# InBalance

Taking charge of your kidney disease



## Making dialysis part of your life

Your guide to taking charge of your kidney disease

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## Understanding dialysis and what it means to you

Beginning dialysis is a big step in a person's life. People starting dialysis usually have a lot of questions, such as, *"How will dialysis affect my life?"*

Along with your questions and concerns, you may experience a wide range of emotions when you start dialysis—all of those feelings are natural. It may be a relief to know that many people who are beginning dialysis have similar feelings.

Starting dialysis isn't easy. But with the right tools, support, and attitude, you can take control of this new chapter in your life. In time, you will become familiar with dialysis—and know what to expect—so it will become part of your routine.

Although this brochure won't answer all your questions, it can help you learn the basics and get you started. Your healthcare team can also answer any questions you might have.



## What's life on dialysis like?

**Dialysis will become part of your lifestyle.** Dialysis can take a lot of time and is sometimes tiring, but it will become part of your weekly routine. Most people on dialysis get 3 treatments per week, and each treatment lasts about 4 hours.

**Over time, you will start to feel better.** At first, your dialysis treatments might make you tired. As time goes by, your body should adjust to the treatments and you should start to feel better. Some dialysis patients even feel ready to go back to work or school after starting treatment. Sometimes people on dialysis are also inspired to get involved in the dialysis community and give back by volunteering in kidney health programs.

**Take charge of your health.** With dialysis, your life choices become even more important. Here are 5 things you can do to keep your dialysis, and your health, on track.



**Go to all of your dialysis appointments**



**Eat dialysis-friendly foods**



**Take all of your medications as directed**



**Stay active—socially and physically**



**Talk openly with your healthcare team**

**You are the most important member of your dialysis care team.** You and your healthcare team will work together to keep you healthy. Your family and friends may also play a role in helping you take good care of yourself. In short, others will be there for you along the way. But remember, good dialysis health starts with you—and the choices you make.



## How much do you know about kidney health and dialysis?

- 1 Approximately \_\_\_ million American adults have chronic kidney disease (CKD).
- 2 Kidneys help remove salt, waste, and extra \_\_\_\_\_ from the body.
- 3 The most common causes of CKD are \_\_\_\_\_ and high blood pressure.
- 4 Dialysis patients should be on a kidney-friendly \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 There are 2 types of dialysis: hemodialysis and \_\_\_\_\_ dialysis.
- 6 The majority of patients in the United States attend \_\_\_ dialysis sessions each week.

## Helpful resources

American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)

[www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org)

American Kidney Fund

[www.kidneyfund.org](http://www.kidneyfund.org)

National Kidney Foundation

[www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)

## Answers:

1. 26    2. water    3. diabetes    4. diet    5. peritoneal    6. 3