

DIALYSIS

WHAT IS DIALYSIS?

Dialysis, also called renal replacement therapy, is a treatment given if the kidneys stop working. Healthy kidneys work like filters for the body. They remove waste and extra fluids in the form of urine. When the kidneys are not working as they should, the urine is not removing what it should be, or less urine is made. This causes waste products and fluid to build up and stay in the body. Dialysis takes over the job of the kidneys to remove the extra fluid and waste.

WHAT TYPES OF DIALYSIS ARE USED?

1. Intermittent hemodialysis
2. Continuous renal replacement therapy

Both types of dialysis need a catheter to be placed into a large vein. Blood is pumped from the body into a dialysis machine where it is filtered. Cleaner blood is returned to the body.

1. INTERMITTENT HEMODIALYSIS (IHD)

- Done for 3 to 4 hours per treatment
- Used for patients who have stable blood pressure
- Done daily or every other day
- Done in the ICU, other hospital units or in an outpatient dialysis center

2. CONTINUOUS RENAL REPLACEMENT THERAPY (CRRT)

- Done continuously for up to 24 hours per day
- Takes longer and is continuous so that a smaller amount of fluid is removed per hour
- Used for patients with unstable blood pressure
 - Cleans the blood at a slower rate than IHD
 - Gentler than IHD
- Only offered in the ICU

The kidney doctor will discuss your condition with the other doctors involved in your care. The doctor will talk to you, examine you, and check your blood tests and/or X-rays to see if the dialysis is working.

YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM CAN HELP

You are the most important member of the health care team. Your doctors will share your options with you. You can work together to decide what will be best for you.