

Kidney *Chronicles*

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

AUGUST 2015

HELPFUL TIPS
TO EMPOWER
ESRD PATIENTS
AS CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good®

Why it's so important to talk to your care team!

At your dialysis facility, effective communication is important for receiving high quality care. Communication helps facility staff better understand you and your needs as a patient. It is also important to remember that communication is the basis of building positive relationships with others. This can lead to increased satisfaction and a decrease in issues and conflicts with others. In addition, communication with the medical professionals at your center can improve clinical outcomes and benefit your overall health.

Five Tips to Improve Communication with Your Healthcare Practitioners

According to Elizabeth Cohen, a CNN senior medical correspondent and author of *The Empowered Patient*, "Patients know their bodies and their illnesses, and know when something's gone wrong. Empowered patients can communicate changes and observations that can make a real difference in their medical care. To have their voices heard patients have to, first of all, speak up!"

- 1. Be respectful.** Your healthcare team is dedicated to helping you achieve the best quality of life and care. It is important to always remain respectful in the manner in which you speak and act towards them.
- 2. Don't be shy.** Your healthcare team cannot know that something is bothering you, if you do not express it to them. It is always important to ask questions, voice your concerns, and tell your healthcare team how you feel.
- 3. Follow your doctor's recommendations.** In order to maintain your health and avoid conflict with your healthcare

How the Network Serves You

- Advocates on your behalf;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials, i.e., newsletters, for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care provided to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

team, it is important that you follow your doctor's medical recommendations. After all, your health-care team has your best interest in mind and wants to ensure that you are taking the appropriate steps to improve your health.

4. Involve your loved ones. Your loved ones, whether it is your family members or friends, can be the most important support system that you have and need. It is important to involve them in conversations with your healthcare team to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

5. Get involved in your care. This is your body, your health, and your life! Stay actively involved in your healthcare by having positive and effective communication with your healthcare team as much as possible. It's also important to remember to attend all plan of care meetings. These are great opportunities to discuss your dialysis treatment with the facility staff. Successful communication in these meetings should include: making your needs as a patient known, listening to all disciplines involved, and asking questions as needed.

Would you like to get more involved in your care? **Become a Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) member!**

Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) members provide a connection between the Network, patients, caretakers, and dialysis unit staff in order to encourage cooperative support within the New England renal community.

The mission of the PAC is simple: to identify and act upon areas of concern and support to ESRD

patients, ultimately improving their quality of life.

Now that you're interested, let's determine whether you're eligible to be a PAC member!

PAC members must follow their treatment plans, be in good standing with their facilities, and demonstrate a positive attitude and a concern for quality of care issues.

All PAC members are appointed by dialysis facility staff and are one of the following:

- ESRD patients currently on hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis.
- Transplant patients who are part of a specific dialysis facility.
- The spouse or immediate family member of a patient.

To learn more about the Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) and how to become a member, please visit our website: <http://networkofnewengland.org/consumers/PAC> or contact Kayla Abella, Community Outreach Coordinator at (203)285-1223 or kabella@nw1.esrd.net

To file a grievance, please contact:

IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New England
1952 Whitney Avenue, 2nd Floor, Hamden, CT 06517

Main: (203) 387-9332

Patient Toll-Free: (866) 286-3773

Fax: (203) 389-9902

E-mail: info@nw1.esrd.net

www.networkofnewengland.org



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