

Kidney *Chronicles*

IPRO END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

FEBRUARY 2016

HELPFUL TIPS
TO EMPOWER
ESRD PATIENTS
AS CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good®

Getting Back to Work While on Dialysis

Many individuals with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) have returned to school, earned degrees and started new jobs and careers. They are able to accomplish these milestones with a lot of hard work, dedication, and awareness of programs that are available to help people living with ESRD transition into the work force.



If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), or have a diagnosed disability, you may qualify to receive help in a number of ways to help you reach your personal employment goal. Support may include job training, or access to required access to adaptive technologies. You can begin the process by speaking with your dialysis social worker about how you can fit a job into your schedule. Explore your possibilities: Check with local and state vocational rehabilitation programs; explore the Social Security Ticket to Work Program.

There are many ways that you can ease your way into working or volunteering and building or rebuilding your resume.

Your Rights as a Dialysis Patient in the Workplace

It is important for you to know your rights as a dialysis patient in the workplace. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires employers with fifteen or more employees to find ways to help workers with disabilities continue working. This help may include providing you with time off to go to dialysis, visit another healthcare provider, do a

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.

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peritoneal dialysis exchange, and/or provide extra rest breaks from work. If you work for an employer that has 50 or more employees, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires that your employer provide a minimum of 12 weeks of unpaid leave to allow workers to take care of their own health or the health of a loved one.

What Do PAC Members Say?

"I retired from teaching 12 years ago. I found working while being on dialysis kept me active, and I did feel pretty good then. My advice to other patients is to keep active while you are on dialysis—you may have to push yourself some days, but overall you will feel better."

"I work managing software development for a financial services firm. To make sure I can work normal hours, I do nocturnal (overnight) in-center dialysis."

Putting Your Health FIRST:

Hemodialysis Catheter Care

As you know, it's important that you check every day for any changes in your dialysis access.

In this month's issue of Kidney Chronicles, we are focusing on hemodialysis catheters. Dialysis patients using catheters have a higher risk for infection, heart problems and death than patients using AV fistulas or grafts as a dialysis access.

Symptoms of a Hemodialysis Catheter Infection

It is important to follow your catheter care instructions, exactly as you were taught, in order to avoid a serious infection. You should know the following signs and symptoms of a catheter infection. Report them to your doctor or dialysis team right away, so you can get the proper treatment as quickly as possible.

Some signs and symptoms of a catheter infection include...

- Fever
- Chills
- Drainage from the catheter exit site
- Redness or tenderness around the catheter exit site
- General feeling of weakness and illness

Treatment

If you have an infection, it will need to be treated with an antibiotic, which could be either placed directly on the skin, taken by mouth or given through a blood vessel. The type of antibiotic treatment will depend on the type of the infection you have and how serious it is.

To file a grievance, please contact:

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