

Missing Dialysis Treatments: Every Dialysis Minute Counts

Have you ever wondered if missing dialysis treatments can be harmful to your health? If so, then this article is for you to read! For example, did you know quitting each hemodialysis treatment 20 minutes early can equal 13 missed treatments per year, or one month of treatments? Missing one treatment each week equals 52 treatments missed per year or 4 months of hemodialysis. Even cutting out 5-10 minutes of your dialysis treatment time can lead to health complications over time. Read on and learn more about why it is important to receive a full dialysis treatment and tips on how to do so.

What are the best results from receiving a full dialysis treatment?

Staying on dialysis for the right amount of time each treatment helps to make sure your blood is clean enough to help you feel better, keep you out of the hospital, improve your overall health, and live longer. Not receiving the full treatment can mean that the maximum amount of

fluid was not removed. The kidney doctors and/or kidney nurse practitioners determine dry weight and amount of time needed for your treatments. Each patient's order is specifically written to provide the best result for the patient based on his/her needs. Avoid comparing your amount of treatment time with someone else's treatment time. They may be different for a reason.

Why is removing the maximum amount of fluid important during a dialysis treatment?

Removing the maximum amount of fluid each dialysis treatment is helpful for your heart, lungs, and brain to function at their best and for you to feel good overall. Missing just one dialysis treatment or leaving before the full treatment time is done will leave extra fluid in your body. This extra fluid can cause you to feel short of breath, have swelling in your feet, hands, arms, and/or have puffy eyes, feel tired and worn out more frequently, and cause your blood pressure and weight to be higher.

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Continued...

Trying to remove the extra fluid during the next dialysis treatment can be hard on your body. It may cause cramping, headaches, low blood pressure, and nausea.

What other problems can be caused by missing dialysis treatment?

Higher levels of potassium and phosphorus can remain in your body when a dialysis treatment is missed or cut short. High levels of potassium can cause heart problems like arrhythmias, which are abnormal heart beats, that may cause a heart attack, or even death. Higher levels of phosphorus also remain in your body when a dialysis treatment is missed or cut short. High levels of phosphorus can weaken your bones over time causing bone disease. High levels of phosphorus can also hurt your heart leading to heart disease over time.

Tips to help you achieve a full dialysis treatment:

- Keep an electronic or paper calendar of your dialysis schedule.
- Block out time for your dialysis treatments, including travel time to and from your treatment, if you receive dialysis in-center.
- Block out meeting times with your

healthcare team if they are not held during your dialysis treatment.

- Utilize your treatment time wisely, especially if you do dialysis during the day.
- Read a book, go through your email and US mail, review recipes and make a list of meals and groceries for the week, listen to your favorite music, write in a journal, sleep, etc.

This article contains a lot of information about the importance of not missing dialysis treatments. That said, there may be times when you need to miss a treatment due to being sick. The following are tips to avoid becoming sick and the need to miss a dialysis treatment.

Tips for staying healthy:

- Eat a renal healthy diet under the direction of your DCL dietitian.
- Be physically active throughout the day doing household chores, walking, and even lifting hand-held weights, water bottles, or cans of food to maintain muscle mass.
- Get quality sleep by going to bed and awaking at similar times each day, sleep in a cool, dark, and quiet room. Also avoid exercising,

eating heavy meals, drinking caffeine and/or alcohol, and smoking before going to bed.


- Reduce feeling stressed by spending time with family and/or friends who support you and make you feel good, watch or listen to videos that make you laugh, get quality sleep, and do chair yoga for relaxation. Contact your DCL social worker for other ways to reduce your stress.

Contact your unit charge nurse for assistance with rescheduling an in-center hemodialysis treatment or for support with doing home dialysis when you are sick. Reach out to your DCL team when needed. We are here to support you along the way.

References:

- Fresenius Kidney Care (2016-2024). Managing Your Time on Dialysis.
- National Kidney Foundation (2024). Missing Dialysis Treatment is Dangerous for Your Health.
- QSource (n.d.). Missing Dialysis.





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March 2024



Newsletter



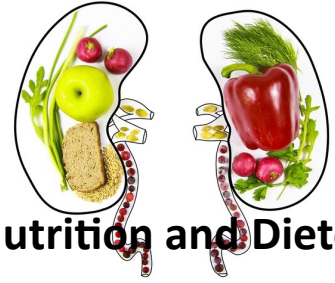
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March 2024



Newsletter



Eat Right Beyond the Table

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

This year's theme for National Nutrition Month® inspires us to look Beyond the Table when thinking about our health and the environment. Choices we make daily, including what we're going to eat and drink, can make a big difference — both now and in the future.

School and family meals are important, but healthy choices go beyond the foods and drinks we enjoy while sitting at the lunch or dinner table. They include our snacks, breakfasts on the go, eating out with friends, and even where foods are grown and how they're prepared. Our food choices also can affect the health of our planet. Have you ever thought about the work that goes into producing the foods we eat? This includes how food is grown or raised, where and how it is made, as well as its safety. It's important to think about the foods we eat and the nutrition they provide, but is there more we could be doing to improve our health and the environment?

These are a few tips to help you reach Beyond the Table:

Focus on a healthy eating routine

Making healthy food choices may seem difficult at times, especially when eating away from home, but it doesn't have to be. Many eating places provide nutrition information right on the menu or online to help you choose healthier options.

When purchasing food from a store, use a grocery list and pay attention to sales. You also can learn about resources in your community that offer access to healthy foods, such as food banks.

Seek the help of a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

Registered dietitian nutritionists, also known as RDNs, are food and nutrition experts who help people live healthier lives. RDNs can help you explore ways Beyond the Table to reach your health goals. Make an appointment with an RDN who specializes in your specific needs to jumpstart your plan for personal wellness.

Learn what's involved in growing your food

There are many ways you can learn about how your food is produced. Visit a local farm or farmers market and talk with the people who are growing and harvesting your food. Many farmers and food producers will be happy to answer your questions, let you sample products or provide recipes for foods

that are new to you. Some local farms even have tours, so people can see how they operate. You also can grow your own fruits and vegetables at home. Want to try gardening but have limited space? Grow herbs or lettuce indoors. Tomatoes, peppers or strawberries may work, too, if you have a patio or porch with enough sunlight. Schools, churches and other places may offer community gardens where you can participate in the growing process and share in the harvest. Not quite ready to get your hands in the dirt? Many local farms offer programs, which include "farm shares" of produce during a growing season.

Depending on the farm, additional products such as eggs or meat might be included. Supporting farmers by buying locally grown and seasonal foods can help you eat with the environment in mind. Other steps include decreasing food waste at home by creating new dishes from leftovers or by composting. You also can add more plant-based foods to your meals and snacks. National Nutrition Month® is a great time to start thinking about how you can go Beyond the Table to improve both your health and the planet's.



SUGAR ALCOHOLS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What Are Sugar Alcohols?

Sugar alcohols, also known as polyols, are a type of carbohydrate commonly used as **low-calorie sweeteners**. Despite their name, they do not contain ethanol (the type of alcohol found in alcoholic beverages). Some sugar alcohols occur naturally in foods like fruits and vegetables, while others are synthetically produced for use in various food products. Common sugar alcohols include:

- **Erythritol**
- **Sorbitol**
- **Xylitol**
- **Maltitol**
- **Mannitol**

These sugar alcohols are often found in sugar-free cookies, candies, ice cream, beverages, and chewing gums. Let's explore their benefits and potential downsides.

The Upside of Sugar Alcohols

1. **Reduced Calories:** Sugar alcohols are about **40% to 80% as sweet as natural sugar**, but they have **25% to 75% fewer calories per gram**. This makes them a useful sugar substitute for people with diabetes or those aiming to cut back on calories.
2. **Slow Digestion:** Sugar alcohols break down slowly in the gut, which means your body absorbs only part of their overall carbohydrates. This helps prevent blood sugar spikes, making them a better choice for managing diabetes.
3. **Dental Health:** Unlike regular sugar, sugar alcohols do not promote tooth decay. Bacteria in the mouth do not feed on sugar alcohols, making them tooth-friendly.

The Downside of Sugar Alcohols

1. **GI Distress:** High consumption of sugar alcohols can cause gastrointestinal (GI) problems, including **abdominal pain, diarrhea, or loose stools**. Individuals with sensitive digestive systems should consume them in moderation.
2. **Not Calorie-Free:** While lower in calories than sugar, sugar alcohols are not zero-calorie sweeteners. They still contribute some calories.

Recommendations

- **Moderation:** Consume sugar alcohols in moderation.
- **Read Labels:** Look for sugar alcohols (often ending in “-ol”) in ingredient lists.
- **Individual Tolerance:** Pay attention to how your body reacts to sugar alcohols.

Remember that sugar alcohols offer a healthier alternative to regular sugar, but they are not without drawbacks. Balance is key! ! Please consult your registered dietitian with any questions about sugar alcohols and if they can be useful in your day to day diet.



SEXUALITY AND KIDNEY DISEASE

Can people with kidney disease or kidney failure still enjoy sex?

It's important to remember that people with kidney failure can have healthy marriages and meaningful relationships. They can fall in love, care for families, and be sexual. Staying intimate with those you love is important. It's something everyone needs.

Many people think that sexuality refers only to sexual intercourse. But sexuality includes many things, like touching, hugging, or kissing. It includes how you feel about yourself, how well you communicate, and how willing you are to be close to someone else.

There are many things that can affect your sexuality if you have kidney disease or kidney failure — hormones, nerves, energy levels, even medicine. But there are also things you and your healthcare team can do to deal with these changes. Don't be afraid to ask questions or get help from a healthcare professional.

What if I lose interest in sex?

Your interest in sex may change when you have kidney disease or kidney failure. At first, you may have less interest in sex. This can happen because you need a lot of energy to cope with the physical and emotional changes brought on by your illness. In time, your interest may return to normal.

Some patients may find it more difficult to have or keep an erection. This is very common with kidney failure. It can result from the side effects of medicine, having a buildup of toxic wastes in the blood that may not be fully removed by dialysis, or other things. Many of these problems can be treated. Don't be afraid to ask questions or get help from a healthcare professional.

Emotions can also affect sexual functioning. This includes stress, de-

pression, nerves, fear of disability or death, marriage problems, and much more. For some people, having kidney disease may cause physical changes that can make them feel less attractive. This can also affect sexual interest. Couples who find that their sex lives are changing should talk to their doctor or social worker. Many of these problems can be treated.

Is sexual intercourse safe for kidney patients?

Some patients and their partners may worry that sexual activity could cause the patient's death or harm the dialysis access or transplanted kidney. No limitations need to be placed on kidney patients sexually. If sexual activity does not place pressure or tension on the access site, it will not cause damage. Fear can cause people to avoid sexual activity needlessly. After receiving a transplant, it is important to wait until the scar has begun to heal. Once your doctor says it is all right to resume sexual activity, there is no reason to worry about damaging the transplanted kidney. For some couples, sexual intercourse is not possible. Some may feel that

sex is not as important as it once was. Activities such as touching, hugging, and kissing provide feelings of warmth and closeness even if intercourse is not involved. Professional sex therapists can recommend alternative methods.

How will I know whether sexual problems are due to physical or emotional causes?

This requires a complete medical, psychological, and sexual history of you and your partner. Medicines should be reviewed for sexual side effects and changed if possible. Blood tests should include hormone levels and blood sugar levels to check for diabetes. Patients can be checked to see if nerve and blood supply to the penis are good and if they can have an erection. If no physical problem is found, an emotional cause must be considered. What can be done if the problem is physical?

Several options are available for those whose penis will not get or stay hard (erection). Penile implant surgery places inflatable or semi-rigid rods into the penis. In some cases, surgery can improve blood flow to the penis. If they do not want surgery, hormones may be given. Oral and injectable medications can cause an erection. External suction devices can make the penis hard enough for intercourse, but they require time and hand strength. Doctors with special training in impotence can give information on all options as well as their advantages, disadvantages, and side effects.

Vaginas usually have less vaginal wetness and may have pain during sexual activity. Lower hormone levels can cause vaginal dryness. Use of a water-soluble vaginal lubricant can lower or stop pain associated with intercourse. Do not use petroleum jelly because it can increase the risk



SEXUALITY AND KIDNEY DISEASE

of infection. Some patients may be unable to have a climax or may need more time to get "turned on" because of loss of energy, hormone changes, or medications for high blood pressure. A change in blood pressure medicine or extra hormones may be needed. Your doctor can provide information on options.

What can be done if the problem is psychological?

Feeling worried, anxious, or depressed is normal when faced with a serious loss such as kidney disease and kidney failure. These emotions can cause loss of energy and lower interest in many activities, including sex. If a sexual problem does occur, embarrassment and guilt often follow. Fear that the problem will happen again may cause the person to shy away from sexual situations. Relaxation exercises can help to control these fears. Regular physical exercise and activity help keep the mind busy and can improve physical condition and body image. If sexual problems continue, sex therapy can help. Even if the problem is psychological, some of the treatment options mentioned for physical problems may be helpful.

Can sex therapy help?

Sex therapy deals with the sexual problems of couples and individuals. The first step in sex therapy may be sexual education for the individual or couple. The therapist may assign activities to be done at home. These include communication exercises, stress reduction activities, and practicing ways of improving skills in giving and receiving enjoyable touches. Sex therapy can help with problems such as low sexual interest, trouble in reaching climax or reaching climax too soon, pain during sexual activity, and erection difficulties. Therapy also can help a person work through the effects of chronic illness on sexual functioning.

A sex therapist can be a psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, or social worker. Look for someone who is licensed and who has advanced training and experience in sexuality and sexual problems. Charges vary and may be covered partly by insurance.

What can kidney patients do to help themselves?

Take an active role in learning about kidney disease and treatment. Follow the prescribed diet and fluid limits. Take all medications properly and tell the doctor of any side effects. Ask for an exercise program to help muscle tone, strength, and endurance. Your doctor and dietitian can suggest a weight gain or loss program, if needed. Lead a healthy lifestyle. Be aware of other things that could affect your sexual functioning, such as drinking too much alcohol and smoking.

What about having children?

While sperm production will not be affected by kidney disease, complications in utero may occur. A new baby is a joy for any family. But pregnancy can put a lot of stress on your body. If you have kidney disease or kidney failure, it can put you and the health of your unborn child at risk. It can also make your kidney disease worse. If you are thinking of becoming pregnant, you should discuss it carefully with your doctor.





SOCIAL WORK HISTORY



Since the first social work class was offered in the summer of 1898 at Columbia University, social workers have led the way developing private and charitable organizations to serve people in need. Social workers continue to address the needs of society and bring our nation's social problems to the public's attention.

Today, Americans enjoy many privileges because early social workers saw miseries and injustices and took action, inspiring others along the way. Many of the benefits we take for granted came about because social workers—working with families and institutions—spoke out against abuse and neglect.

The civil rights of all people regardless of gender, race, faith, or sexual orientation are protected.

Workers enjoy unemployment insurance, disability pay, worker's compensation and Social Security.

People with mental illness and developmental disabilities are now afforded humane treatment.

Medicaid and Medicare give poor, disabled and elderly people access to health care.

Society seeks to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Treatment for mental illness and substance abuse is gradually losing its stigma.

The social work profession celebrated its centennial in 1998. That year, several important artifacts from across the country were donated to the Smithsonian Institution to commemorate 100 years of professional social work in the United States.

Social work pioneer Jane Addams was one of the first women to receive a Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded in 1931. Known best for establishing settlement houses in Chicago for immigrants in the early 1900s, Addams was a dedicated community organizer and peace activist.

Frances Perkins, a social worker, was the first woman to be appointed to the cabinet of a U.S. President. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor, Perkins drafted much of the New Deal legislation in the 1940s.

Social worker and civil rights trailblazer Whitney M. Young, Jr. became the executive director of the National Urban League while serving as dean for the Atlanta School of Social Work. He also served as president of NASW in the late 1960s. A noted expert in American race relations, Time Magazine acknowledged Young as a key inspiration for President Johnson's War on Poverty.

Other famous social workers include Harry Hopkins (Works Progress Administration), Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Women), and Jeanette Rankin (the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress).



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