

Dialysis Schedules



Tips for Patients and Staff

Scheduling issues are a common source of frustration for dialysis patients and staff. Here are some of the many factors that clinics consider when planning the dialysis schedule:

- Patients' length of time for dialysis.
- The need to space out 'put-ons' and 'take-offs' so they don't fall at the same time.
- Staff availability.
- Patients' schedule conflicts such as work, childcare or eldercare needs.
- Transportation schedules.
- Patients' level of medical need, such as needing to use a Hoyer lift to transfer.
- State and federal regulations regarding care in the clinic.
- Patient safety, such as Hepatitis B status.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is now enforcing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on cleaning the dialysis machine and chair to reduce infections and prevent cross-contamination between patients. As a result, many clinics have had to make changes to patient schedules by increasing the amount of time between treatments. When the clinic is running at full capacity, it can be difficult to be flexible. Patients and staff must work together to keep schedules running smoothly.

What can you do to help your dialysis day run smoother and as on time as possible?

PATIENTS

Your schedule is not yours alone:

- Be clear. Let staff know as soon as possible if you are running late or unable to make the appointment. That way, the machine does not get set up and supplies wasted.
- Be considerate. If you're running late and don't get on/off at your scheduled time, the patient who uses your chair after you could be put on late or you may not get your full treatment.
- Be flexible. Emergencies may slow down the process. The needs of the clinic change, so your staff and chair location may change too.
- Be understanding. Any time changes can impact the clinic's ability to stay on schedule for the rest of the day.
- Be patient. If you request to get off early, you may need to wait a bit until staff can help you.
- Be efficient. Schedule your transportation wisely. If you do not build in extra time, you risk missing dialysis time or the ride.
- Be pro-active. Give staff as much notice as you can if you need a change in schedule or would like to travel to another clinic for vacation.

STAFF

Every patient's schedule counts:

- Be consistent. Follow established schedules.
- Be respectful. Every patient's time is important. Let the patient know if there is a delay and offer options, including making up lost treatment time, if possible.
- Be creative. Some patients might be willing to change times to help other patients in a pinch.
- Be courteous when patients make schedule change requests.
- Be helpful. Keep a waitlist for patients who have requested a different schedule. Move them when a time slot becomes available.
- Be flexible and accommodating, offer make-up time even if it is not the clinic's fault that time was missed. If a schedule change request does not affect safety, do what you can.
- Be considerate. Give patients as much notice as possible if you must change their schedules. Give notice in writing and check back to see if the patient has other needs around the change.

**Talk to your clinic about home dialysis.
It's the best way to get full control over your own schedule!**