

# Kidney *Chronicles*

IPRO END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK  
OF THE OHIO RIVER VALLEY

MAY 2016

**HELPFUL TIPS  
TO EMPOWER  
ESRD PATIENTS  
AS CONSUMERS**



Improving Healthcare  
for the Common Good®

## What You Need to Know About Calcium

Calcium is very important to our health. It is needed to help the human body with important functions that include bone growth, normal blood clotting, and healthy function of nerves, muscles and the brain. However, too much calcium in the blood, also called hypercalcemia, can lead to health problems that can affect different parts of your body.

### How much calcium does a person with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) need?

People living with ESRD need to watch their calcium levels carefully. Having too much calcium in your blood can cause a condition called hypercalcemia. This can cause calcium to deposit in various parts of your body including blood vessels, which could then cause heart disease.



This is one of the reasons your healthcare team monitors your blood work every month. Remember, calcium can be in food, drinks, dietary supplements, and even in calcium-based phosphorus binders. It's important to know that many things can affect your calcium levels. You should review your monthly lab work closely with your nephrologist and your dietitian. Communicating with your healthcare team is very important to make sure that you are doing all you can to keep your calcium levels within a healthy range.

If your blood calcium level is higher than 10.2mg/dl (milligrams per deciliter), you have hypercalcemia. Speak with your dietitian and healthcare team to learn more about how you can reduce your calcium levels.

### How the Network Serves You

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

**In an emergency,  
if you can't reach  
your facility,  
contact us.**

## Treatment Options

You have options for treating your kidney disease, as well as the choice to not receive treatment. With the help of your doctor and loved ones, you can find the treatment that best fits your personal and medical needs.

### Home Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)

PD treatments are performed by placing a cleansing fluid (dialysate) into the abdomen through a small tube or PD catheter. This tube filters waste and extra fluid that the kidney is unable to remove from the body. Benefits include fewer dietary restrictions, less likelihood of nausea, needle-free treatments, and more flexibility with your time and travel than you would have with other types of treatment.

### Home Hemodialysis (HHD)

To perform HHD, you will need four to eight weeks of training by a home dialysis training nurse. Benefits include the ability to dialyze in the comfort of your own home, fewer dietary restrictions, flexible treatment times, the ability travel, and dialyze more frequently than you would with in-center treatments.

### In-Center Hemodialysis

With this treatment, you will dialyze three to four times a week in a dialysis facility. Benefits include being cared for by trained kidney care professionals and enjoying social interactions with other patients.

### Nocturnal Dialysis (done in-center or at home)

This treatment allows you to dialyze for a longer period of time in the evening while you are sleeping. Benefits include improved appetite, more energy, better blood pressure control than provided by other options, and the opportunity to work and do other activities during the day.

### Kidney Transplant

Kidney transplant may be an option if you are an eligible candidate. To find out if you can have a kidney transplant, you will need to be assessed by the transplant team at a transplant center. Benefits include improved overall health and quality of life, more energy, and freedom from dialysis.

### The Choice to Receive No Treatment (Palliative Care)

You have the right to choose not to receive any form of treatment for your kidney failure. However, if you choose not to start treatment or would like to stop current treatment, you are putting your life at risk. "If the time comes that you want to consider stopping treatment, talk with your family and your healthcare team about counseling and programs such as hospice."

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "You Can Live: Your Guide for Living with Kidney Failure"



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To file a grievance, please contact...

End-Stage Renal Disease Network of the Ohio River Valley  
3201 Enterprise Parkway, Suite 210, Beachwood, OH 44122

Phone: (216) 593-0001 • Patient Toll-Free: (844) 819-3010

Fax: (216) 593-0101 • E-mail: [info@nw9.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw9.esrd.net) • Web: [esrd.ipro.org](http://esrd.ipro.org)



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Developed by IPRO ESRD Network of the Ohio River Valley while under contract with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.  
Contract HHSM-500-2016-00009C