



## Don't Miss A Minute

# Reducing Hospitalizations

**The Facts:** On average, a dialysis patient dialyzes three times a week for 4 hours each treatment. This treatment replaces the work that your kidneys performs 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Missing minutes of dialysis decreases the improved health benefits (outcomes) seen with dialysis and increases the likelihood of complications and hospitalizations.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Dialysis is so hard. Why is it important that I stay for my full treatment?** The dialysis treatment you are receiving replaces only a small amount of the work your kidneys do to remove fluid and waste products. If you don't get enough dialysis, your blood will accumulate those waste products and excess fluid.

### What will happen to my body if I miss dialysis?

- Feeling weak, tired, and getting short of breath when moving around.
- Losing your appetite and feeling nauseated
- Swelling of your ankles, stomach or other areas
- Taste of ammonia in your mouth
- Prolonged bleeding times after dialysis

### Additionally, patients who shorten or miss three more treatments in a month have:

- Higher risk of hospitalization
- May develop serious life threatening complications
- Could be delayed from getting wait-listed or removed from the transplant wait list
- A greater chance of infection
- Fluid may accumulate around the heart, causing the heart to swell and ultimately

**I feel fine and do not have any problems when I miss or cut my treatments, so why do I need to come or stay the whole time for my treatment?** The effects on your health from less dialysis may not show up overnight. You may not feel ill until there are lasting health effects on your body. For example, you may not notice the extra fluid building up in your body but it will make your heart pump harder which can cause it to swell and wear out your heart.

### I only miss or shorten a few treatments now and then, how can it hurt?

Missing 1 treatment per month = 12 treatments per year = missing an entire month of treatment per year. Shortening each treatment 1 hour = 144 hours of dialysis a year = 36 missed treatments per year.

**How can I make dialysis more enjoyable and complete all my required dialysis time?** Other patients who are successful coming and staying on treatment suggest that you make a plan to fill your time during dialysis. Suggested activities include:

- Cards or hand held games
- Hobbies (i.e., sketching, crochet, word puzzles, or reading)
- Be a patient facility representative! Join your facility team to improve the health and quality of life of your fellow patients

**What if I have an emergency or prior commitment on dialysis days?** Talk to your facility staff to reschedule your treatment so you don't miss a minute of your valuable dialysis!



**To file a grievance, please contact us:**

### IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network Program

Corporate Office: 1979 Marcus Avenue, Lake Success, NY 11042-1072

Patient Services: (516) 231-9767 • Patient Toll-Free: (800) 238-3773

Email: [esrdnetworkprogram@ipro.us](mailto:esrdnetworkprogram@ipro.us) • Website: [esrd.ipro.org](http://esrd.ipro.org)

Developed by the IPRO  
ESRD Network Program  
while under contract  
with Centers for  
Medicare & Medicaid  
Services. Contract #  
75FCMC19D0029

09/23/21 Version 1