

How Old Is Too Old for Home Dialysis?

Will I be able to do the training?

Will I be able to remember what I learned?

Will I have support at home?

Will I be able to learn the technology?

Some people feel overwhelmed by the technology and amount of training needed to conduct dialysis at home. This is often the case for older adults, but the benefits an older person can experience with home therapy are a great reason to reconsider this option.

Benefits of home dialysis

- People on home dialysis have treatments more frequently than those who receive their treatments in a dialysis clinic. Because treatments are done more frequently, they are gentler on your body. This can result in
 - » less chance of your blood pressure dropping;
 - » better control of swelling (edema) and your blood pressure being too high;
 - » increased energy level;
 - » feeling better after dialysis;
 - » fewer restrictions on your diet and fluid intake;
 - » reduction in the amount of medications you have to take.
- Doing your dialysis at home will mean that you no longer have to travel three times a week to your dialysis facility, saving you time, travel costs, and stress in dealing with traffic and/or bad weather.
- You also have the flexibility to travel, do your hobbies, and schedule your treatments around your social life and activities.
- You and your doctor can choose a home modality that best fits your lifestyle. Home hemodialysis is done via needles into your access site or through your venous central line. Peritoneal dialysis is done using a surgically placed catheter in your abdomen, so no needles are necessary. Either treatment can be done on your own, without assistance.



While home therapy may seem like a lot to consider, these benefits can make a difference in your quality of life. Talk to someone on your dialysis home care team about any concerns you may have.

Tips to help make starting home therapy more successful

There are many things you and your dialysis team can do to prepare you to feel confident and secure in making the move to home dialysis. You can talk to your dialysis home care team about structuring your training sessions to fit your learning style.

Some additional suggestions for getting the most out of your home dialysis training:

- Repeat training sessions until you master each step; this might include having you demonstrate the step you have learned.
- Invite family members/caregivers to be a part of the training process to help support you.
- Educate yourself about all home modalities to find the best fit for your lifestyle.
- Partner with your in-center team; ask them to show you the equipment you'll be using for home dialysis. It may be helpful to observe a machine setup.
- There are many different types of machines available for peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis. Ask your care team to show you options that would work best for you.
- If you decide to do home hemodialysis, start your self-cannulation education in-center before the transition to home hemodialysis, so that you feel very confident in your ability to conduct your treatment.

Resources, support, and aids are available to help you with your home dialysis treatments. Ask your team about:

- How available they are to answer questions for you once you are home.
- Equipment that can help you connect and disconnect from the peritoneal dialysis if you have problems with your hand strength.
- Magnifying goggles for sight issues during connects and disconnects.
- Pictures and visual aids to help you remember the steps you learned during your training once you are home.
- Emergency support through on-call nurses 24/7 from your dialysis company as well remote monitoring systems for home hemodialysis.
- Creative strategies for storing supplies if your space is limited.
- How to use smart devices like Alexa or Google Home to call 911 if you cannot get to your phone in the event of an emergency.
- You can also make arrangements with your local fire department to allow them access to your home via a lock box should you have an emergency.

Important to Remember

You are your best advocate! But you are not alone. Your treatment team is available to help and support you. Talk with your dialysis care team to discuss the best home modality for you.



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