2014

Acute Hemodialysis

Capital Health
Acute Hemodialysis

Why are my kidneys important?
Kidney function is essential for life.

The kidneys:
1. Remove extra water from the body or keep water in the body when needed.
2. Remove waste products and balance body minerals.
3. Make hormones that help balance some body functions (such as blood pressure, calcium levels, and making red blood cells).

How will I feel if waste products and fluids build up in my blood?
You may have some or all of these symptoms:
› Feeling very tired
› Weakness
› Sick to your stomach
› Bad taste in your mouth
› Itching
› Problems sleeping
› Forgetfulness
› Shortness of breath
› Swelling
**What is acute kidney failure?**
Acute kidney failure is a sudden loss of kidney function (your kidneys stop working). Kidney damage may be reversible if it is caused by a serious injury from shock, trauma, an accident, medication, or obstruction (a blockage).

**What is dialysis?**
Dialysis is a life saving treatment which takes away wastes and extra water from the blood.

**What is hemodialysis?**
When the kidneys fail, hemodialysis is a life-saving treatment used to clean the blood of waste products and extra fluid. Blood must leave the body, go through the artificial kidney (filter) where it is cleaned, and then return to the body.

**How long will I be on hemodialysis?**
Hemodialysis may only be needed for several weeks until your kidneys have time to recover. There is a chance that your kidney function will not recover and you will need dialysis on a long term basis.

**How often will I need hemodialysis?**
Waste products can build up quickly. Dialysis is needed 3 times or more a week. Each treatment lasts about 4-5 hours. Your nephrology (kidney) team will check your blood work and then figure out your need for dialysis. Each person has different needs.
What are non-tunneled/tunneled hemodialysis catheters?

These catheters give access to the blood for hemodialysis treatment. A catheter is a tube made of special plastic.

- The catheter is inserted (put in) by a doctor into a large vein in your neck or chest. Sometimes it may need to be placed into a large vein in the leg.
- Usually you will have 2 stitches in your neck or groin to hold the catheter in place.
- You may notice that the catheter has 2 lumens (tubes) coming from your neck or chest; however, there is only one catheter inserted under your skin.
- One lumen is used to carry blood from your body to special tubing that is connected to the dialysis machine where it is cleaned. The cleaned blood is returned to your body through the other lumen.

A non-tunneled catheter is used as a “temporary” access for your hemodialysis. A tunneled catheter can be used for a much longer time period. This catheter is put in place by a radiologist in the X-ray Department.
Living with kidney disease

Hemodialysis treatment can pose many daily challenges for you and your family. These may include diet changes, activity changes, and feelings of uncertainty, disbelief, helplessness, or anger. Most people go through a period of adjustment. There are resources to help you deal with these changes.

Resources available to you

Nurses, doctors, social workers, dietitians, peer support volunteers, and spiritual care workers are available to support you as you deal with the sudden changes in your life. Please speak with a member of the nursing staff if you have any questions or concerns.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada has many resources available to you including “Living with Kidney Disease”. This resource is free of charge. It will be given to you at your follow up visit with the nurse.

It can also be found on their website: www.kidney.ca

Follow up

In about 3-4 weeks, if your kidney function is not reversible, you will have a visit with a registered nurse who will talk with you about your dialysis options. You should be feeling better by this time. It will now be easier to learn about your current treatment and other home treatments that may be available to you.
If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.

Notes:
Looking for more health information?
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles, and online health information. For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to www.publiclibraries.ns.ca

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