



**KEYS TO  
A LONG LIFE**

## **Just the Facts: Rehabilitation**

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### **What is rehabilitation?**

The purpose of dialysis is not *just* to keep you alive. Dialysis is also meant to help you stay active and keep doing the things you love. **Rehabilitation**, or rehab, for people on dialysis means being able to do things you need and want to do.

Rehab goals are different for each person. If you worked before your kidneys failed, rehab for you might mean keeping your job. If you did a sport or hobby before, rehab might mean doing those things again.



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### **Why is rehab important to me?**

Adjusting to a chronic disease can be very hard. It is even harder if you think your life will never be as good as it was before. Rehab can help you make a *new* life that may be different from your old life, but is still good.

### **Does my center do rehab?**

Rehab can be very different from center to center. Some centers have exercise bikes to ride during dialysis. Some centers have support groups for patients or families. Some centers have bulletin boards with pictures of active patients. Some have newsletters. All of these—and more—are part of doing rehab.

One thing *every* center must have to do rehab is a caring staff who want patients to stay well and reach their goals.

### **How do I set rehab goals?**

You know what you want to do with your life. Think about what steps you must take to get there. Your nurse or social worker may be able to help you. As you reach each new step, you will see that you *can* make your life better.

### **What is *my* part in my rehab?**

There are three things you can do to help your rehab. 1) Have a positive attitude. Focus on the good side of things, not the bad. 2) Learn all you can about kidney failure and dialysis so you can stay as healthy as possible. 3) Take action to meet your goals.

*You* are the key person on your rehab team. By thinking positive, learning, and taking action, you *can* live long and live well on dialysis.

## How can I meet my rehab goals?

Problem	How can I prevent it?	What should I ask?
I have trouble staying positive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to other patients who are doing well.</li> <li>• Spend time with people who have positive attitudes.</li> <li>• Start a support group in your center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can I do to keep my spirits up?</li> <li>• Can patients use a room in the center to hold support group meetings?</li> </ul>
I don't know enough about kidney failure and dialysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a list of questions to ask your doctor or the staff. Make an office appointment if you need more time.</li> <li>• Do research at the library.</li> <li>• Ask questions of other patients who are doing well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there patient booklets in the center for me to read?</li> <li>• Are there any videos about dialysis?</li> <li>• Where can I learn more about _____?</li> </ul>
I don't know what goals to set.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to family, friends, and staff to get ideas.</li> <li>• Make a list of things you enjoy. See if the items have something in common.</li> <li>• Start small at first. Goals can be in any area—like building up strength to climb stairs, or learning to put in your needles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I want to do _____, how should I start?</li> </ul>

## Where can I find more information about rehab?

- Life Options Rehabilitation Program - Call (800)468-7777, write to Life Options at 603 Science Drive, Madison, WI 53711, e-mail Life Options at [lifooptions@medmed.com](mailto:lifooptions@medmed.com), or visit the Life Options website at: <http://www.lifeoptions.org>
- American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) - Call (800)749-2257, write to AAKP at 100 South Ashley Drive, Ste. 280, Tampa, FL 33602, e-mail AAKP at [AAKPnat@aol.com](mailto:AAKPnat@aol.com), or visit the AAKP website at: <http://www.aakp.org>
- National Kidney Foundation (NKF) - Call (800)622-9010, write to NKF at 30 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016, or visit the NKF website at: <http://www.kidney.org>

