



# Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program  
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## Q: When will I start feeling like “myself” again?

**A:** Many people on dialysis hope that a miracle will make their kidneys work again. This may be because they want to feel like they did before their kidneys failed.

You may or may not feel like you did before, but after a month or two of dialysis, you should feel a lot better. The more closely you follow your doctor's orders and the more active you are, the better you can feel.

Most people on dialysis have said they felt so much better after a few treatments that they wished they hadn't put off dialysis so long. Others have more problems getting used to the treatments, or getting enough dialysis to feel good and do things they enjoy.

Problems that can get in the way of feeling good include:

- **Anemia:** a shortage of red blood cells that can leave you feeling tired and weak. It takes a few weeks for anemia treatment to start working.
- Emotional adjustment. Depression and sadness are common in people who start dialysis, but can be treated.
- Wrong dry weight (your weight without extra fluid). Dry weight can take time to figure. If your treatments pull off too much fluid, you may feel “washed out” and tired, or even have muscle cramps.

- Drinking too much fluid between treatments, so more fluid must be removed at each treatment.
- An allergy to a medication or a chemical used to sterilize the dialyzer. Your doctor may be able to prescribe a change.
- Not enough dialysis—you may need a stronger prescription to feel your best.

### What I can do to start feeling like “myself” again:

- Follow my diet and fluid limits.
- Report any problems I'm having to my doctor.
- Get my full dialysis treatments and make sure I'm getting adequate dialysis by asking about my lab tests.
- Tell my social worker if I feel sad or blue.
- Get out with friends and family—keep doing things I enjoy.
- Stay active. Ask my doctor for an exercise plan and get moving.
- Consider getting more treatment by doing daily or nocturnal hemodialysis at home or in a center.
- Visit Home Dialysis Central at [www.homedialysis.org](http://www.homedialysis.org) to learn more.