



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program  
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## Q: Why are there often changes to my medications?

**A:** It may seem like your doctor changes your drugs a lot—especially in the first months of dialysis. The goal of treatment is to help you feel your best, and to get there, some drug changes may be needed.

Why your doctor may change the dose, timing, or type of drugs you take:

- Any drug you take can have side effects. If the side effects outweigh the benefits a drug has for you, your doctor may change the drug.
- Drugs may need to be changed or doses adjusted after dialysis starts to clean your blood. For example, your blood pressure or diabetes drugs may need to be changed after you start dialysis.
- You may have a new health problem that requires a new drug or changes to drugs you were taking.
- Some drugs you take may react badly with other drugs, causing problems for you. Changing one or more drugs can help you feel better.

**What I can do to take my drugs correctly:**

- ❑ Keep a list of drugs prescribed by *all* my doctors, plus any over-the-counter drugs and supplements I take, and share it with my care team.

- ❑ Before I take any new drug, ask my doctor what it's for, when and how much to take, what side effects it can cause, and if I can take a generic.
- ❑ Ask for samples of any new drug to see how it works and whether I have problems with it before I buy more than a month's supply.
- ❑ Read the drugstore's fact sheet on any new drug I get.
- ❑ Tell my doctor about any new symptoms I have after taking any drug.
- ❑ Talk to my doctor before I stop taking a drug or change how I take it.
- ❑ Visit module 4 of Kidney School™: *Following Your Treatment Plan* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more about taking drugs correctly.