



Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program
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www.lifeoptions.org

Who can help me with insurance, work, or school questions?

Q: Who can talk to my employer or school about dialysis?

A: Most employers know nothing about kidney disease. Many believe that people with a chronic illness or disability won't be able to work as hard or will get sick and miss more work. Studies have proven these beliefs to be false.

Your advocates. Your doctor, social worker, or vocational rehabilitation counselor can help you talk with your employer. With your permission, the doctor or social worker can talk with your employer and explain dialysis, how it is scheduled, and what *you* need to keep working while on dialysis. You may also need to advocate for yourself.

If you give up your job, it can be hard to find a new one. Keep your job, it will mean more income—and, often, health insurance. This means you can worry less about money. For your employer, it's much less risky to keep a valued employee, even on dialysis, than to hire someone new who may not know as much or work as hard.

What I can do to help educate my employer or school:

- Take the time to educate others—family and friends, teachers and students, employers and co-workers—about kidney disease and treatment
- Ask my doctor or social worker to explain kidney disease and dialysis to my employer, if needed.

- Ask my social worker for a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation for an assessment, advocacy, and help keeping my job or going to school.
- Learn my rights and demand them if I feel I've been treated unfairly.
- Read *Employment: A Kidney Patient's Guide to Working and Paying for Treatment* at www.lifeoptions.org/catalog/catalog.php?prodCat=booklets.