



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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What do I need to know about other treatments for kidney failure?

## Q: What do I need to know about other treatments for kidney failure?

**A:** If your lifestyle or health changes, or you are not happy with your treatment choice, you may want to do a different treatment. You do have options:

### Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)

PD is done at home, using the body's own peritoneum (tissue lining the belly) as a filter to clean the blood. A soft, plastic catheter is placed in the abdomen by a surgeon.

Dialysate fluid is put into the peritoneum through the catheter, where it absorbs wastes and extra fluid. After about 4 hours, used dialysate is drained out through the catheter and thrown away, and fresh fluid is put in. PD can be done by hand 4-5 times a day, with a cycler machine at night, or both. You decide your schedule. The PD diet allows more freedom, too.

### Hemodialysis (HD)

HD uses a plastic dialyzer and a machine to clean the blood. Two needles are put into a dialysis access (an artery and vein linked together). Blood goes through one needle and tubing to the dialyzer, and cleaned blood comes back through the other needle.

HD is most often done 3 times a week (MWF or TRS) for about 4 hours at a dialysis center. It can also be done at home, on your own schedule. In many areas, home HD can be done at night during sleep, or every day for 2-3 hours. People using nightly or short daily home HD say they feel much better, and studies report that their labs are very good.

### Kidney transplant

A kidney transplant is a form of treatment, not a cure. A new, healthy kidney is placed into the abdomen by a surgeon and connected to the ureters (urine tubes) and bladder.

Kidneys can come from living or deceased donors. Finding a living donor means asking family members or friends if they are willing to donate. Finding a kidney from a deceased donor means getting on the national transplant list. To keep a transplant from rejecting, costly anti-rejection drugs must be taken as long as the kidney transplant works. A kidney-pancreas transplant may also be an option for people who have type 1 diabetes.

### What I can do to learn my treatment options:

- Ask my doctor if my health prevents me from doing any treatment.
- Make a list of the pros and cons of different treatments for me.
- Don't let anyone underestimate my abilities to do anything I want to do.
- Visit module 2 of Kidney School™: *Treatment Options for Kidney Disease* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn about dialysis and transplant.
- Visit Home Dialysis Central at [www.homedialysis.org](http://www.homedialysis.org) to learn more.