

St George Hospital

Peritoneal Dialysis Winter Care Newsletter

Issue 1

2025

"Winter may be long, but spring always follows. Hold on to hope, for brighter days are ahead." - Unknown

Winter Care Tips—Keeping You Safe and Healthy This Winter

As we enter the colder months, it's important to adapt your daily routine to protect your health and ensure smooth dialysis treatment. Here are some key winter care tips:

1. Stay Warm, Stay Well:

Cold weather can take a toll on your health. Keep your home comfortably warm, particularly in the area where you do your dialysis. Dress in layers, wear warm socks, and keep your feet dry. A cozy blanket during your dialysis session can make a big difference in keeping you comfortable and warm.

2. Stay Safe, Stay Well:

Flu season is upon us, so it's vital to take extra precautions. Avoid close contact with anyone who has cold or flu symptoms, and consider wearing a mask in crowded places. Good hygiene goes a long way—wash your hands often and use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available. Most importantly, stay up to date with your flu vaccination. It's a simple step that offers strong protection.

3. Stay Active, Stay Well:

Colder weather might make it tempting to stay indoors and rest—but staying active, even in small ways, is important for your health. Light exercises like stretching, walking, or gentle yoga can help improve circulation. Just a little movement each day can boost your energy, mood, and overall well-being.

4. Stay Hydrated—But Within Limits, Stay Well:

Even though you may not feel as thirsty in winter, staying properly hydrated is still essential. Be sure to follow the fluid restrictions recommended for you. Remember that hot soups, tea, and other warm drinks all count toward your daily fluid limit. Managing your fluid intake carefully helps maintain proper hydration whilst preventing fluid overload.

As always, we're here to support you through your dialysis journey. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our team. Remember, taking small steps to care for yourself can make a big difference in your health.

Wishing you a healthy and safe winter season!

Warm regards,

Claire, Emma, Fiona and Maria

St George Hospital
Renal Care Centre



Contact us
02 9113 3770

Peritoneal Dialysis Unit
Monday–Friday
7:30am–4:00pm
(except public holidays)

IMPORTANT

If your PD catheter is contaminated, faulty or leaking, go to St George Public Hospital immediately to prevent treatment delay. Decontamination must be done within 24 hours to avoid infection.

Vaccinations Matter: Stay Protected This Winter

It's essential to maintain necessary vaccinations, particularly during the colder months. Here are a few key vaccines to keep up to date with:

1. **Flu Vaccine (FluVax):**
Flu can lead to serious complications for people on dialysis. If you have not had your flu shot this year, speak to your GP as soon as possible.
2. **Pneumonia Vaccine:**
Recommended for anyone over 70. It helps prevent serious lung infections. Ask your GP if you are due for a dose.
3. **Hepatitis B Vaccine:**
This vaccine helps protect your liver from a serious viral infection. If you have not been vaccinated or are unsure of your status, speak with your GP or kidney doctor.
4. **COVID-19 Vaccine:**
Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations. This remains one of the best ways to protect against severe complications from COVID-19. If you have not received your COVID-19 vaccine or booster shots, please discuss with your GP or kidney doctor immediately.

Not sure which other vaccines you need as a dialysis patient? Talk to your kidney doctor or GP to check and stay protected this winter.

PD Catheter Care: Essential Winter Considerations

Winter can increase the risk of infection and complications for PD patients. Follow these key tips to protect your catheter and stay well during the colder months:

1. **Prioritize Hand Hygiene**
Wash your hands thoroughly before and after every PD connection, disconnection, and dressing change. Moisturise your hands regularly to prevent dryness and skin cracking.
2. **Keep Warm, Stay Dry**
Cold weather can weaken your immune system. Dress warmly, especially when outdoors, and avoid getting chilled. After showering, ensure the exit site is completely dry before dressing.
3. **Daily Exit Site Care**
Cleanliness is key to preventing infection. Clean and inspect your catheter exit site daily or after every shower. Change your dressing regularly according to your PD nurse's instructions.
4. **Mask Up When Needed**
Wear a mask during PD procedures if you have a cold, cough, or are sneezing or if you are around anyone who is unwell.
5. **Watch for Signs of Infection**
Contact your PD nurse immediately if you notice redness, swelling, discharge, or pain at your exit site, cloudy PD fluid, or a fever. Early reporting and treatment help prevent serious complications.
6. **Stay Connected**
If you're unwell, travelling, or unable to perform PD safely, contact your PD nurse or kidney doctor for advice. Don't delay—early communication helps us support you better.