

St George and Sutherland Renal Department

Home Haemodialysis Patient Information

Sydney Dialysis Centre (SDC), located in St Leonards provides comprehensive training, nursing and technical follow-up for patients of St George and Sutherland Dialysis Units. SDC has established a satellite home haemodialysis training unit at the St George Hospital (STGH) for the convenience of patients living in the area, which means training, is available closer to home and can be tailored to fit around work commitments. This service primarily operates at STGH but can be provided at the Sutherland Hospital (TSH) if the need arises. A trip to SDC for an interview and the final part of training is required, but the majority of training is completed at STGH. Usually training will take an average of 8-10 weeks. The duration of training is very individual, so the time frame is tailored to each patient's needs.

What are the benefits of Home Haemodialysis?

- Home haemodialysis makes it possible for you to remain independent of hospital care, rigid routines, a "sick" environment and the risk of cross infection.
- Home haemodialysis allows flexibility with days or hours for dialysis treatments and can be done while asleep, leaving your days free for work, school and recreation.
- Our data from quality of life surveys repeatedly identifies home haemodialysis as the dialysis option which promotes the best quality of life.
- Home haemodialysis provides the opportunity for successful rehabilitation and continued employment.
- Time, money and difficulties in arranging transport are saved by not having to travel to dialysis three times every week.
- Home haemodialysis comes with good follow up support in the home by trained staff, including technicians.
- You should experience fewer problems with your fistula or graft because the same person puts the needles in each time.
- Home haemodialysis is good for patients who are located away from hospitals as home haemodialysis reduces the need for patients to come to hospital.
- You can perform home haemodialysis if you live alone.

But most of all home haemodialysis offers flexibility and improved quality of life

Because you are at home you are not restricted to the usual three times a week dialysis for a set number of hours. Many home haemodialysis patients now dialyse every second day or overnight. Longer hours of dialysis mean better clearance of waste and fluids from your body. Kidneys normally work 24 hours a day therefore longer and/or more frequent dialysis will make you feel better, stronger and reduce the restrictions and medications you may otherwise have to take.

What are the benefits of more frequent & longer dialysis?

- Dialysis related symptoms eg lethargy, post dialysis headaches, cramps etc are significantly reduced.
- Better fluid control with reduced restriction on fluid intake
- Better nutritional status with reduced restriction on foods that contain potassium and phosphate
- Less sleep disturbances
- Less medication required e.g. blood pressure and phosphate binders
- Sexual desire and activity is improved
- General physical, mental and long term health outcomes are improved.

In total SDC cares for approximately 150 patients on home dialysis. STGH have around 50 patients who perform haemodialysis treatment at home. Most patients do 5-6 hours every second day. About 25% of the patients perform nocturnal (at night) dialysis for 8-10 hours. Approximately 35% of the patients perform dialysis solo (without any support from family or friends).

Who is suitable to do home haemodialysis?

People who have:

- Motivation to succeed and are self reliant at home
- Good eyesight
- Good hand dexterity
- The ability to understand the concepts of home haemodialysis
- Good vascular access (fistula or graft)
- Space at home for equipment
- Good general health, memory, alertness and mobility.

What are the costs for home haemodialysis?

The dialysis machine, water filters, dialysis fluids, disposables and blood pressure machine are provided without charge. Nursing and technical care at home is provided at no charge. Water and electricity costs are subsidised to assist with encouraging patients to stay at home. Plumbing installation in your home is arranged by you and reimbursed up to \$800 by the dialysis company. At present, patients are responsible for the cost of a chair, a side table, a set of digital scales, a phone, a torch, floor covering and storage for dialysis supplies. A recliner chair is recommended for daytime or evening dialysis. Overnight dialysis is usually performed in bed. Also, the following small items are also required: liquid soap, paper towels, a pair of scissors and household garbage bags.

What kind of house modification is required?

Haemodialysis uses large amounts of water; as a result, plumbing modifications in the dialysis room are required for the machine. The training nurse will provide you with a plumbing diagram. You may need to provide modified power points for the dialysis machine. The SDC technician who will visit your home as part of the home inspection will mark the power points requiring modification for the electrician and will discuss a suitable location for the dialysis machine and plumbing. These should be fitted by a qualified plumber and electrician.



Figure 1, Haemodialysis machine & reverse osmosis machine

How much dialysis space is required?

The choice of the room used at home for dialysis is up to you. Think about where you wish to spend your time while on dialysis. You will need a minimum of 2.5metres by 2.5metres of clear

space for a chair and machines. You also need an area equivalent to a wardrobe for the dialysis supplies, with a combination of shelving and open area being ideal.

Home support

You can use the 24 hours on call trouble shooting service if you come across any problems dialysing such as machine alarms. A home haemodialysis nurse attends 3 monthly home visits and a dialysis technician services your home dialysis machine every 6 months.

What do the home haemodialysis patients think?

“I do haemodialysis at home and I have been on it for a few years now. You can do it when ever you want but I have a routine of every second day. I get up early and I am finished by lunchtime. I know my own machine and I know my own arm and where to put the needles. I have control over the whole process” JS

“Home haemodialysis is more flexible. I do dialysis every second day and I work three days a week” Wendy



Figure 2, Patient performing haemodialysis in her lounge room

Being Assessed for Home Haemodialysis

If your kidney doctor or renal nurse believes you could benefit from home haemodialysis, they will arrange for a home training nurse to speak with you. If you are already attending the hospital or satellite unit, you can talk with your kidney doctor or the home training nurse about the possibility of doing home haemodialysis.

You (and your partner if applicable) will then attend an interview conducted by one of the nursing staff at SDC. This will allow you to fully discuss what is involved for both of you in the training and Renal Department, 2012

on-going care at home. The nurse will also assess your vascular access and suitability for home haemodialysis. Your name will be placed on a waiting list at STGH and every attempt will be made to commence your training at the same time as you are required to start having dialysis, if you have not done so already.

Access to reduced parking rates at the parking facility

You can apply for the 5 day Parking Pass at the METRO parking facility if you are driving to hospital for training. Please ask a training nurse for further information.

Further information

Additional information about home and nocturnal haemodialysis is available from the following.

- ❖ National Renal Resource Centre, Sydney Dialysis Centre
Tel: 9462-9455, Tel: 1800 257 189 or email: renalresource@nscchhs.health.nsw.gov.au
www.renalresource.com
- ❖ Kidney Health Australia
Tel: 1800 4 543 639 or email: health@kidney.org.au, www.kidney.org.au
- ❖ Nocturnal Dialysis
www.nocturnaldialysis.org.au



Figure 3, Patient performing nocturnal haemodialysis

References:

1. SDC Training Manual
2. Kidney Health Australia Home Haemodialysis: a treatment option brochure
www.kidney.org.au