



Haemodialysis at home; the patients' views

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www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

Have you thought of dialysing at home?

We are very keen to support you to think about doing your own haemodialysis at home. This has benefits both for your health and for the way you lead your life as it allows you to dialyse more often if you want to.

Our patients are the best advert for this type of treatment and over the next few pages are some of their stories. All these patients used to have haemodialysis in one of our units. Our patients range in age from 23 to 82. Some work full time, others just appreciate the fact that they don't have to travel to a dialysis unit. There is no such thing as a typical home haemodialysis patient!

Here is what they have to say:

“Home haemodialysis has changed the lives of both me and my carer.

No more battling with traffic and the weather to travel to the unit, and no waiting to be put on and taken off my machine. I can dialyse in the comfort of my home knowing help is only a phone call away.

I decided to change to 2¼ hrs, 6 days a week rather than the drawn out 4 hours. This proved to be the best thing I have ever done. I can now have a day out and dialyse either before I go or when I get back.

My blood results are more consistent and my diet is not so restricted. I look forward to my day off on Sunday but dialysis is no longer such a trial knowing I don't have the tedious four hours ahead of me.”

Colin from Sutton Coldfield

“Home dialysis has changed my life as a kidney patient. Instead of time wasted travelling to a unit, in my case nearly an hour each way, and then often waiting to go on a machine, I now stay in the comfort of my own home. No more rigid schedule which made me miss things I wanted to do. I am now free to arrange my dialysis whatever time of the day or week and vary the frequency and length of sessions. I think that being in control empowers you. Spending less time in a hospital situation makes me feel better.

Learning to operate the machine is not as difficult as it might seem and there is always back up should there be a problem.

There is no way I would give up my home dialysis by choice.”

Susan from Pershore

“It took us a long time to agree that we might like to do home haemodialysis and now I find myself recommending it to others.

The major problem I found with dialysis in a clinic, even when you have your own transport, is the waiting, especially for the night sessions. If you have to rely on ambulances the additional waiting time can be far longer than the time for dialysis itself. The support and training we have received has been excellent. It was not long before we both felt quite confident that we could manage on our own and although a little nervous about the first couple of days at home, we have never regretted the decision we made. There is, in any case, always someone on the end of a telephone to support us if we have questions – even in the middle of one Sunday night! I admit that I have never liked needling myself, it is never much fun, but you soon get quite good at it and you don’t worry about it.

Now I can choose when I have the dialysis to suit our arrangements for the day or the week. I feel I am now living a much more normal life which is tailored to my own needs and has a lot less rushing around.

Because I don’t have to keep going off to the clinic and because of the fact that I am more in control myself I feel fully independent, a great deal more confident and much less like an invalid.”

Graham from Walsall

“Home haemodialysis gives you back your independence, you can dialyse on a day and a time to fit your schedules as long as you follow your weekly dialysis hours.

As you are dialysing in the comforts of your own home you feel better health wise and because you do not have to travel to a unit it can help to reduce your stress levels.

Home dialysis is complimented with an excellent back-up system of doctors, nurses and technicians.”

Diane from Smethwick

“My husband and I undertook six weeks training at the QE under the careful supervision of the Community Renal Sisters. It was a bit daunting at first but as the weeks went by it all fell into place and now it is second nature. There is always someone on hand to help if there is a problem with the machine or my dialysis but this does not occur very often.

Dialysis at home has made life so much easier for me and my family. I have been able to continue with my job, I am not away from my family for hours three times a week and it has a certain amount of flexibility. I am able to alter the times of my dialysis when needed to suit my needs such as birthdays, and Christmas. There is also no waiting around for the machines or transport.

The support provided by the home dialysis staff is second to none, I always feel confident doing my treatment and I fully recommend home dialysis.”

Lynn from Sutton Coldfield

“Dialysis in itself is a necessary evil that is never going to be easy, there is no getting away from that fact, so why not make it as comfortable and as pleasant as it possibly can be. The benefits far outweigh the negatives.”

Tony from Walsall

“I dialyse daily which means I generally feel much better. I never get loaded with fluid and I’m not so restricted on what I eat. Doing this has allowed me to come off some of my medication. We get all the support we need from the renal team who are always at hand to answer any questions.”

Adam from Kidderminster

“Nocturnal home dialysis (dialysing at night) has given me my life back. Dialysis is now just a minor inconvenience, a bit like the washing up. If you just do one good thing for yourself and your family, this should be it.”

Halfy from Tenbury

Training can be flexible, but is usually at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for 6 weeks, although we can often do some of your training at your usual dialysis unit if this is more convenient for you. You may also prefer to have some time dialysing yourself at your unit before going home.

You will need:

- A water and electricity supply to the room where you will be dialysing
- Space in order to accommodate a dialysis machine and some other equipment (but you would be amazed where we can fit it if we have to!)
- Ideally someone to be with you when you dialyse (but this may not be vital)

If you are interested please contact the team on 0121 627 5752 and we can arrange a visit to see you at home to check if this is suitable, and to discuss with your Consultant as to whether they feel that this treatment will suit you. We can also arrange for you to talk to some of our patients who are the real experts!

Where can I find further sources of information?

Further information can be obtained from:

- The National Kidney Federation www.kidney.org.uk
- NHS Choices www.nhs.uk



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk or call 0121 627 7803

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