Dialysis (Renal Dialysis)
Care After Dialysis

Dialysis is a *therapy* (treatment) which removes the toxic wastes from the body when the kidneys fail. The can no longer do their job of removing toxic wastes. There are two types of dialysis:

- **HEMODIALYSIS:** In hemodialysis blood is pumped from the body through a filter. The blood is cleaned of waste products when the blood goes through this filter. Cleaned blood is then returned to the arm. This is similar to running your gas through a filter to filter out dirt. Hemodialysis is performed in a dialysis center for 4 hours, three times a week. Dialysis is performed through an arteriovenous (a v) access, (blood vessel access). The main advantage is no training is required. Disadvantages include graft failure and lack of freedom, as you must remain relatively near a dialysis center. Your caregiver can explain this to you.
- **PERITONEAL DIALYSIS:** In peritoneal dialysis the body's own membranes are used as filters. Fluid is put into the *abdomen* (belly) and after a length of time is drained out. This replaces the kidneys in getting rid of the body poisons. Advantages are that it can be done at home with careful technique. It allows more freedom and less needle sticks. Disadvantages are *peritonitis* (this is an inflammation of the inside of your abdomen) and membrane failure. Your caregiver can explain this to you.

PROBLEMS IN DIALYSIS

- Anemia-Erythropoietin may be given to help *anemia* (low red blood cells). Red cells are important to help the heart, and maintain energy. Erythropoietin is a hormone which stimulates the body to make more red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen to your cells.
- Dialysis Adequacy-The better your dialysis, the more waste products are removed and the better you feel. This is known as dialysis adequacy. It is measurable. Know your values so you will know how you are doing.
- Nutrition-Albumin is a protein in the blood that indicates how good your nutrition is. If this is low it may mean that you are not adequately *dialyzed* (cleaned). It can also mean your nutrition is poor.
- Hypertension-Control your blood pressure. High blood pressure damages your heart and vessels. It is important for dialysis patients to exercise as much as possible.
- Graft Problems-A high pressure in your graft arm may mean that the vessel leading from your graft is narrowed, and that repair may be needed to help protect your graft. The pressure in this port is known as the access pressure.
- Dialysis Filters-Some blood filters used in dialysis are more *compatible* (better matched with you) than others. Your caregiver will help you with this.
- *Vascular* (vessel) Disease-Heart and vessel diseases are common in kidney patients. Keep your cholesterol under control. Exercise regularly or as directed.
- Infections-Infection is common in dialysis patients. Keep your graft site clean, and note any sign of inflammation, fever, chills, sweats or weakness. Report these to your caregiver.

Document Released: 07/10/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/16/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.