



# Can I Refuse My Nurse or Technician?



Patients often call the Northwest Renal Network wanting to know if they may refuse care from a staff person.

There are no specific federal or state laws in our region that address this issue. In most situations, dialysis centers do not allow patients to refuse care from specific staff. The center's "*Patients Rights and Responsibilities*" document (a document often given to each new patient) may address this issue. In extreme cases, patients may have some grounds to refuse care from a specific staff person; however, this is rare.

While dialysis centers typically do not have to agree to reassign staff, they should attempt to address your concerns. Furthermore, you and the dialysis center may be able to agree on other ways to address your concerns.

Listed below are some suggestions on handling the situation.

- ◆ Do not wait until the staff person tries to put you on dialysis. Bring up any concerns before the dialysis treatment. Waiting until the person tries to put you on, only increases conflict and makes everyone uncomfortable.
- ◆ Put your concerns in writing. The facility manager will want to know specifics.
- ◆ Request a private meeting with the manager. It is usually not best to discuss your concerns in the treatment area.
- ◆ If the manager is not immediately available, ask the charge nurse to reassign the staff person until you can meet with the manager to discuss your concerns.

The dialysis center may be willing to address your concerns in other ways. Consider suggesting the following:

- ◆ Having a break from the staff person for a couple of weeks.
- ◆ Having another staff person assist the person for a couple of sessions.
- ◆ Having the manager review your areas of concern with the staff person.
- ◆ Having a meeting with the manager and staff person to discuss your concerns.
- ◆ If needles are your greatest concern, ask the manager if you can be trained to insert your own needles.

Your treatment team needs to respond to your concerns. It is important that you feel comfortable at dialysis and have confidence in your treatment team.

While you may not be able to refuse care from specific staff, there are other ways of having your concerns heard and addressed. If you find yourself unable to reach a solution, follow your center's grievance procedure.

You may also contact the Network for assistance at:

**Northwest Renal Network**

**Patient Help Line**

**1-800-262-1514**

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