



# Network

## Consumer News

**LARGE PRINT VERSION**

### **Won't You Stay Just a Little Bit Longer?**

Many dialysis patients find it hard to stay for their full treatment time, and sign off early. Why is it important that you receive your full treatment as prescribed by your doctor? A few of the reasons:

- The hemodialysis treatments you are receiving replace only a small part of the normal function of your kidneys.
- If you don't get enough dialysis treatment, your blood will have too much of your body's waste products and you will feel sick.
- Patients who shorten three or more treatments in a month have a higher risk of death than those who stay the entire treatment.
- Shortening or missing treatments can prevent you from getting on the transplant list.

When you don't get enough dialysis you may have many of the same problems you had before starting dialysis. Some of these symptoms are weakness and tiredness, not eating well, nausea, taste of ammonia in your mouth, and swelling of the heart. You may have a greater chance for infections and a long bleeding time after dialysis. You may have bad cramps and low blood pressure during your next dialysis treatment due to the need to pull off the extra fluid caused by the shortened treatment.

Keep in mind, your dialysis treatment of about 4 hours 3 times a week is trying to make up for what normal kidneys do 24 hours every day for seven days. There are 168 hours in a week and dialysis is only about 12 hours a

week. For you to stay in good health you must get all of the treatment ordered by your doctor. So reward yourself by making your best effort to stay the entire treatment. ***It will be worth your time!***

Shortened Treatments Add Up		
Minutes lost per treatment	Minutes lost per year	Hours lost per year
10 minutes	1,560 minutes	26 hours
15 minutes	2,340 minutes	39 hours
20 minutes	3,120 minutes	52 hours
30 minutes	4,680 minutes	78 hours

## What a Difference a Day Makes

When you miss dialysis, you may not experience any problems right away, but studies show that inadequate dialysis will shorten your life expectancy. Let's take a closer look at the risks:

- Worsening of **anemia** and **bone disease** as a result of not receiving scheduled intravenous medications at dialysis.
- **Cardiac complications** – cardiac arrhythmia, cardiac arrest and death, due to high potassium levels.
- **Cerebrovascular complications** i.e. stroke that could lead to disability and death.
- **Cramping** and **low blood pressure** during next dialysis session due to removing the extra, built-up fluid caused by missing treatment.
- **Fluid overload** – shortness of breath from fluid in lungs that may require emergency room visit and emergency dialysis.

***Missing 1 day of treatment a week = 4 months a year and takes years off your life!***

# Who Decides How Much Dialysis You Need?

Your kidney doctor tells dialysis staff how much time you, as an individual, need to stay on dialysis. The time your doctor gives the unit is how much dialysis you need in order to remove waste (urea) from your blood. This time is set by looking at your monthly lab results from blood drawn before your dialysis. If your numbers are too low your doctor may give you a longer dialysis time to help you get better. If you do not stay your full treatment the waste stays in your body and you will have a harder time leading a normal life. If you are having problems that keep you from following your doctor's orders, talk with your social worker. No one knows how you feel or what your life involves away from dialysis unless you tell them.

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## RELATED WEB RESOURCES

American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)

[www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org)

- AAKP My Health – a tool that puts you in charge of your health

Kidney School

[www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org)

- Following Your Treatment Plan
- Getting Adequate Dialysis

**Northwest Renal Network**

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**Patient**

**Toll-Free Number**

**1.800.262.1514**

[www.nwrenalnetwork.org](http://www.nwrenalnetwork.org)

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# We Can Help Navigate Your Journey with Kidney Disease



Northwest Renal Network offers many services for kidney patients

- Access to a library of resources
- Questions about employment and kidney disease
- Learn about transplant
- Explore treatment options
- Information on travel and dialysis – Dialysis Facility Compare  
[www.medicare.gov/dialysis](http://www.medicare.gov/dialysis)
- Request our News Bulletins by email  
[nwrnbulletins@nw16.esrd.net](mailto:nwrnbulletins@nw16.esrd.net)
- Call our toll-free number if you have concerns about patient care:  
**800-262-1514**

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