



NORTHWEST RENAL NETWORK

— Serving Network Area #16 —

A Patient Guide to Machine Alarms

Below are explanations of some of the *alarms* you are likely to see and hear during your dialysis treatment. Be sure to work with your care team to better understand how the machine operates, and **do not** reset any alarms without their permission. More dialysis information can be found on our website at www.nwrenalnetwork.org or by contacting the Network Office.

Arterial Pressure: This is the pressure in the arterial blood line between your needle and the blood pump. It is always negative because the pump is pulling the blood from the needle. If the machine is trying to pull blood from you faster than the needle can give it, an alarm will activate. This alarm will stop the blood pump and close the venous line clamp.

Venous Pressure: This is the pressure in the blood tubing between the blood pump and your venous needle. It is always positive because the pump is pushing the blood back into your needle. If the machine is pushing the blood faster than the needle can receive it, an alarm will activate. This alarm will stop the blood pump and close the venous line clamp.

Conductivity: This measures the concentrations of dissolved chemicals in the dialysate solution. If it is high it means that there are too many chemicals dissolved. If it is too low it means that there are not enough chemicals dissolved in the solution. If the conductivity gets out of range, the machine will open the bypass valve. This will cause the unsafe dialysate to be dumped down the drain and keep you safe.

Temperature: This measures the temperature of the dialysate solution. If the dialysate is too hot, it can damage your red blood cells. If it is too cold, it can cause you to feel cold. If the temperature gets out of range, the machine will open the bypass valve. This will cause the unsafe dialysate to be dumped down the drain and keep you safe.

Air in Blood: This monitors the blood in your venous line. It can sense very small amounts of air, which would be harmful to you if it got into your body. If the air detector senses air in your blood, it will cause an alarm to stop the blood pump and close the venous line clamp.

Blood Leak Detector: This monitors for blood leaking out of the dialyzer and into the dialysate solution. Breaks in the dialyzer membrane can cause you to lose precious red blood cells. They can also allow bacteria to get into your blood. If a blood leak occurs you will have to throw away the dialyzer and start over with a new one.

Mute Button: The dialysis machine has a button that silences the alarm for a short while. This button does not restart the machine functions.