



Kidney Disease Treatment Journey

A patient's path to receiving dialysis or a kidney transplant is complicated and can be a long and stressful journey. Although a transplant may be the best option, many patients begin with dialysis because it is the most immediate care available.

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Primary Doctor's Referral to Nephrologist

If a patient advances from chronic kidney disease to kidney failure, also known as End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), their primary doctor will refer them to a kidney specialist, called a nephrologist. If the kidney failure is not reversible, **the nephrologist helps them plan for treatment options and refers them to a local dialysis clinic to begin treatment: Either in-center hemodialysis or doing their own dialysis treatments at home after training.** Most patients start dialysis in a local hospital prior to going to an outpatient dialysis clinic, especially those who may not have received regular care from a physician during their declining kidney disease. A minor surgical procedure must be done prior to starting dialysis to create a dialysis access.

At the Dialysis Clinic

A multidisciplinary team of nurses, dialysis patient care technicians, dietitians and social workers provide **comprehensive medical, nutrition, and psychosocial support.**



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ESRD Medical Evidence Form

When the patient starts treatment, the clinic must complete an ESRD Medical Evidence Form which is sent to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The purpose of this form is to provide medical evidence of the need for dialysis treatment or a kidney transplant. It also begins the application for Medicare if a patient is under age 65 and chooses to enroll.



Treatment for Kidney Failure is Lifelong

A patient can be on dialysis for years, as this may be their only option if they are unable to receive a kidney transplant. This life-saving treatment becomes routine for many patients, but it can also be emotionally and financially taxing, which is why it is so important for clinics to provide consistent care.

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