

Kirklín Clinic Kidney Talk

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How My Kidney Disease Has Affected My Life



I was at Mercy-Cooper Green Hospital for a nephrology appointment and I'm thinking, Okay, I'll get checked out and go home, but I got the shock of my life when I was told I had end stage renal disease and spent a week and a half in the hospital. But the real adjustment began when I started dialysis at Cooper Green and when I came home. The next two months were anything but pleasant: changes in my diet, having these red and blue things hanging from my neck, fistula surgeries and thoughts of what's going to happen to me now and how much time I've got left to live? And not always having enough energy to do things and the not so pleasant things that happen from the four hours and change of being connected to a machine that removes stuff that my once health kidneys used to. But I'm so thankful to my nephrologist at Kirklín Clinic and every one of the DaVita staff and patients and technicians there (former and present) for helping me to have an extended amount of time on this planet. Thank you so much.

Reading Food Labels

Who would ever think buying groceries is like buying a car?

It is.

When you buy a car, you read the label. How much is the car? What does it have in it? How will it fit your needs?

Buying food is the same. You read the label to find out how many servings you will get and what you are getting.

Food labels can help but they can confuse too.

The first thing to look for is how many servings. Then think, "If this is two servings, will I eat the whole bag (or can or box) or only half?" If the answer is all, then the calories and all other information are times two.

There is other important information. In the Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) clinic, we look at the sodium in food. Sodium is salt and salt can make your blood pressure high.

You should try for food with less than 20% sodium. More than that is high. If you eat more than one serving, it can really be high.

Next, look for phosphorus and potassium. This can be tricky because they are listed as ingredients, and sometimes you have to look for part of the word. For example, look for pyrophosphate and potassium chloride.

It takes practice and comparing brands, but reading labels with care makes you a healthier person.

Seasonal Recipes

There are many great foods to be enjoyed at this season. There is no need to miss out on any of these. Ask the CKD staff for recipes the whole family can enjoy.

Love Your Skin

Winter brings cool breezes, falling leaves and Dry Skin. Dr. Lauren Hughey, UAB dermatologist (skin doctor) offers some tips for dealing with dry skin.

1. Use warm, not hot water. Hot water may feel good but it dries the skin.
2. Take shorter showers and tub baths.
3. Use mild soap such as Dove sensitive skin or Cetaphil. Don't overuse soap – focus on hands, feet, privates, and underarms. Use soap sparingly on other body areas and rinse well. In general, avoid liquid soaps or shower gels as they sometimes leave a film which can dry the skin.
4. Within 3 minutes of shower/bath, apply a moisturizing CREAM. Creams are better than "liquidy" lotions in pump bottles. Some examples of good fragrance-free sensitive skin creams are Cetaphil cream, Eucerin cream, Cerave cream, Vanicream, and Amlactin cream.
5. Don't rub itchy skin with alcohol or witch hazel. The cooling effects help for a minute but they make the skin dry. And dry skin itches.



Patient Story

About four and a half years ago I was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. I found myself experiencing shortness of breath. I went to a local clinic. My blood pressure was extremely high and I was referred to the UAB Emergency Room. After being in the intensive care unit for a couple of days, I started dialysis in the hospital. Thanks to the miracles of modern medicine, I'm alive to tell my story. I've learned that your attitude has a lot, if not everything, to do with how you handle your dialysis treatment.

I've been anxious, depressed and stressed, but my interdisciplinary treatment team has helped me with informational publications.

Living with a chronic illness is a life altering experience and a challenge. Maintaining your emotional well-being is an essential part of coping effectively. Diet, exercise and the support of my church, family and friends have been a big help. My doctor says I'm a model patient. I don't miss treatments. I stay my full treatment. I take my medicines. I couldn't have made it without the support and encouragement of my nurse practitioner. My dietitian helps me keep ideal lab outcomes. My social worker helps me understand all the complicated social security and medical paper work. Don't forget the techs in the clinic.

I'm truly blessed and thankful.

Thank God

