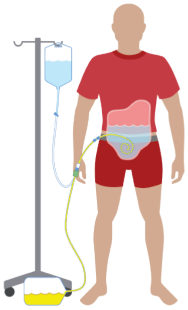
What to Expect from PD Training & Your First Months Home



Welcome! Since you are taking this course, you are getting ready to learn how to do PD. Now, let's talk about what comes next.

There are Two Ways to do PD:

1. **Continuous** (all the time) *ambulatory* (while going about your day) PD: CAPD.
2. **Automated** (using a cycler machine at night) PD: APD*.
   * You may hear APD called *continuous cycling* PD: CCPD.

It may take a week or so to learn either type of PD. Most nurses will teach you CAPD first. CAPD lets you do PD using just gravity when you travel or if you lose power.

You Will Go to a Clinic for Training.

A nurse will teach you all the steps you need to do your PD safely at home:

- **Drain** out *effluent* (used PD fluid).
- **Flush** air out of the lines.
- **Fill** with fresh *dialysate* (PD fluid that removes excess water and wastes).
- **Dwell** (keep the fluid in your belly).
- Care for your catheter and exit site.
- Prepare the room where you do PD.
- Put on a mask and wash your hands.
- Keep germs out when you connect to your catheter.

When You Have Questions, Ask! There are no stupid questions. The best way to stay safe is to know why you do each step. You can call a PD nurse or tech support any time.

Take Photos of Your Exit Site, Once it Heals.

Each time you do your exit site care, check for these signs of irritation or infection:

- Is it red?
- Is it swollen?
- Is there pus or a crust?
- Does it hurt?

Worried about your exit site? Call your PD Nurse.

Avoid Infection!

Before you open your catheter:

1. Close the window(s) in the room you are using.
2. Turn off fans and close heating and air vents.
3. Wear a mask.
4. Wash your hands for three minutes.

There are Three Strengths of PD Fluid.

Each bag works the same way. Dextrose (a sugar) is used to pull water out of your blood. The bag strengths are color coded.

- **Yellow** has the *least* dextrose—and pulls the *least* water out of your blood.
- **Green** has *some* dextrose—and pulls *some* water out of your blood.
- **Red** has the *most* dextrose—and pulls the *most* water out of your blood.

Dextrose is Hard on Your Peritoneum.

This is why you may have a fluid limit: to protect it. The more you can use yellow bags, the longer you may be able to do PD. Some people use **purple** bags for a long dwell that pull water using starch, not dextrose.

Where Can You Store Your PD Supplies?

Your first PD supply shipment could take up a whole pallet! Most often, later shipments are smaller. You will need a space for 25-35 or so boxes. Not all of the supplies need to be in the same room.

Mark Delivery Days on Your Calendar. Make sure someone will be home. Add these numbers to your contact list in case you need help:

- Customer care
- Shipping vendor
- Your clinic
- Your PD nurse and on-call numbers

Expect to Feel Overwhelmed at Times. If you start feeling sad or angry a lot, it may help you to talk to a therapist. Or, share how you feel with others who do PD.

Keep Records of Your Home PD Treatments. Every day you will track:

1. Your weight
2. Blood pressure and pulse
3. Your temperature
4. Which strength of PD bag(s) you use
5. How much dialysate you fill with
6. How much effluent you drain out

Good records help your nurse follow your health and help if you hit a snag. Keep all your records in a safe place. A PD cycler can send some or all of your records to your nurse.

Do You Have a Partner? Most people can do PD without one. In fact, doing your own PD gives you back some control over your life. If you can do your own exchanges, there is no need to teach your partner how—they can help in other ways.

Where Can You Do PD? When your PD catheter is open, you need a space with:

- Easy to clean surfaces.
- Good lighting, so you can see what you are doing.
- No moving air or pets.

It takes a half hour to do each CAPD exchange, so you will want to be comfortable. Most people do APD in their own beds. You do not have to be home to do PD. People have done PD in hotels, cars, and RVs.

PD Should Not Hurt. Watch for and act on symptoms. Call you nurse if:

- PD fluid burns or you have shoulder pain.
- You have belly pain, a fever, or signs of infection.
- You use a cycler, and it hurts to drain.

If it's hard to breathe or you have chest pain call 911.

Don't let chronic disease make you feel alone. Reach out to family and friends. Join a local group to stay busy. Try online support groups. We all need to connect with other people.

As You Get Used to PD, Add Things You Love Back into Your Life.

Ease into exercise with your doctor's okay. Plan to travel. Pick up an old—or new—hobby. Your body may not feel the same when you start PD, at least until you get used to it. Follow limits your doctor or nurse give you.

Next Steps: Once you adjust to PD, you will find a new normal. We hope you enjoy getting back control over your life and your health. PD is flexible and you can make it fit into your life, so you can keep doing the things that matter to you.