

## Your First Few Months at Home on HD

**Congratulations!** You passed training and you and your nurse feel confident that you will succeed at home. Let's talk about what comes next.

### Your Machine Arrives.

Where will you dialyze?

- You may want a room just for HD, where you can close the door.
- No spare room? Some like to do HD in a living or family room.
- Will you want quiet time alone or to spend HD time around others?
- You might want to start off by yourself and invite others when you are comfortable.
- How you feel may change over time.

**Give yourself grace.** It takes time to find a routine and feel like you've got this.



**Children and Home HD.** How a child feels about home HD will mostly depend on how you talk about it. Use words that a child will understand. For example:

**"Kidneys clean our blood. My kidneys got sick and do not clean my blood anymore. So, I use a machine to clean it for me. This makes me feel better and stronger."**

Some children want to help. Let them! Give them age-safe tasks such as:

- Tear tape strips
- Listen to a fistula
- Make supply packs
- Bring you a snack

**Your First Vendor Supplies.** You will need bags of dialysate, blood, water lines and dialyzers. The first shipment tends to be the biggest.

- **Scheduled supplies** come from the vendor.
- **Off-schedule supplies** may come from a common carrier like UPS.
- Your clinic will give you some supplies too.

**Mark delivery days on your calendar.**

**Store supplies somewhere indoors and dry.** You could store them in a closet, against a wall, or under furniture. A basement or garage can work if it is dry and insulated.

**Your First Clinic Supplies.** For each treatment, you will need things like:

Moisture sensors	Saline	Masks	Tourniquets	Disinfectants
Needles/ Syringes	Tape	Bandages	A sharps bin	Meds
Paper drapes	Gauze	Gloves	Blood tubes	Test strips



**Organizing Your New Life.** So, you have a machine. You have vendor supplies, and clinic supplies. Now, you need to sort out what will make things easy for YOU.

**Keep an extra bag of saline on top of your machine. That way, if you need to use some during HD, you won't have to look for a bag to do rinseback at the end.**



**Training Wheels For Your First Home Treatment.** Your training nurse will visit your home for your first home HD treatment. This way your nurse knows your set-up, so they can better help you if you call during a treatment.

**Your First Few Days at Home.** Make space in your day for treatments. They don't have to be at the same time or the same days. Do you have a partner? If so, work out times together, since your treatment affects you both. It can take some back and forth to find what will work best.

### **Use Your HD Checklist to Avoid Mistakes Before You Make Them!**

- Check your set-up before each treatment.
- Inspect all lines and clamps.
- Check that your settings are correct.
- Make sure no parts are missing or damaged.
- Have extra saline and emergency supplies on hand.

### **Use Treatment Time for Things You Enjoy.** You might:

- Read, watch TV, listen to music
- Solve a puzzle or play a game
- Invite a friend over to hang out
- Work from home or learn something new
- Find online support or pursue a hobby



**Save Time.** Take a break from volunteering. Pay bills during treatment. Toss a meal into a crockpot, cook ahead on weekends, say yes to friends bearing food. This stage will NOT last forever.

**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.**

### **In the First Few Months at Home, You Will Reach New Milestones:**

- Your first round of blood tests
- Your first water testing
- Your first home clinic visit
- Your first routine supply order
- Your first treatment sheets to send in.

**Resist the urge to take short cuts!**

**The First Few Months at Home Are by Far the Hardest.** You know what to do—but have to do it in a new space. Take your time. **This feeling is normal! It will pass.**

**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 home HD.**

### **How You Can Tell if Home HD is Working for You.** You may notice that you:



- Feel better overall.
- Have more energy.
- Are less anxious.
- Have a better appetite.
- Enjoy a clearer mind.
- Sleep better.
- Regain your desire for sex.
- Think about things besides health.

### **As You Get Used to HD, Add Things You Love Back into Your Life.**

Ease into exercise with your doctor's okay. Pick up an old—or new—hobby. If you want to travel, start with a short, local trip. Your nurse can help you plan it. Once you do your first overnight trip, the next one is easier. This is how people on HD find freedom again.