

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?

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

- 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.

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.