



Why is travel important to me?

Travel, especially for vacation, is fun! Changing your routines and seeing new places is refreshing, and can lift your spirits. Travel allows you to stay close to special people in your life. Some jobs may require it. Travel can also make you feel like you're living a more normal life.



I'm on hemodialysis. How do I plan travel?

First, start planning early—some units need a few weeks notice to fit in a traveler. Other units need a few months—or even a year.

Ask your social worker for a list of the dialysis units where you want to visit. You may have to drive to a nearby city if there is no unit where you will be.

Call the units to see who has time open on the dates you need. Have your home unit's address, fax, and phone numbers handy, because forms must be sent for your social worker or travel coordinator to fill out. *Check back a few weeks before you go to be sure they still have a chair for you!*

What else do I need to know?

You must have a recent (within 6 months) EKG and chest X-ray. You may have these in your records. If not, ask your doctor to order them; they may be covered by insurance. Some units also require an HIV test.

Hand-carry your home doctor's phone number, all your medicines, the log sheet from your last treatment, and any lab results that were not sent ahead.

I'm on PD. How do I plan travel?

If you're going for 1 or 2 days, pack your supplies and enjoy yourself. If you're going for a longer time, or flying, tell your PD nurse your plans. Ask her for names of nearby units to call in case you have a problem.

Thirty days before a long trip, tell your PD supplier where to ship your bags. The supplier will ship anywhere in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Two days before you go, call to confirm your supplies have arrived.

If you use a cyclor and are flying, pack it in its case. Call the airline to make sure they will "gate check" the cyclor as a critical medical supply. This means you carry it to the gate, and the cyclor is last on, first off the plane. It will be waiting at the arrival gate.

What are other key things I should know about dialysis travel?

Problem	How can I prevent it?	What should I ask?
I'm afraid my treatments away might not be as safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn all about your dialysis. Then you can see if something is not done right. • Most differences are in style, not quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything special I should look for when I visit another unit?
My luggage is lost with my medicines in it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEVER pack medicines in your suitcase. Always put them in a carry-on bag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I call here for help if I lose my medicines or run into trouble?
I'm feeling really sick—and I'm away from home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your nephrologist right away. • Carry an Emergency Instruction Sheet, with your condition, medicines, and what to do if you are found unconscious. Keep it in your wallet at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you please check my Emergency Instructions to be sure I didn't forget anything? • Who should I call if I get sick while I'm away?
The caregivers there might not be as nice to me as they are here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First impressions mean a lot: Be cheerful. Be on time. • Tell staff how grateful you are for the service. • Be an ambassador of good will for all future visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you get a lot of visiting patients?
I don't know if Medicare will pay for my treatments if I travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare covers U.S. treatments only. • Ask your social worker about travel in or out of the U.S. if you have HMO or work insurance. Some ask for cash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you help me find out if my insurance will pay for treatment in the U.S.? • How much will I have to pay out of pocket for dialysis in Europe?

Where can I find more information about travel?

- *National Listing of Medicare Providers Furnishing Dialysis and Transplant Services* – U.S. Government Printing Office, (202)512-1800, \$24.00.
- Travel websites at: www.dialysisfinder.com and nephron.com/usacgi.html
- List of foreign dialysis units that accept travelers – *Dialysis and Transplantation* magazine, (800)782-7328, \$10.00.

