



Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

414 D'Onofrio Drive, Ste. 200

Madison, WI 53719

www.lifeoptions.org

Q: When will I feel well enough to work?

A: If you know that you will want to keep your job, take a leave of absence if you need one—don't quit. Working helps you to have more money, self-esteem, and, often, health insurance.

While your kidneys were failing, wastes built up in your body. You may have been sick to your stomach and not eating much, so tired you only wanted to sit or sleep, and depressed about your health.

With good dialysis, within a month or two most symptoms should get better and you may be ready to work. You should feel more like eating and have more energy. The amount of time you need to feel ready will depend on the kind of work you do. If your job is very active, you may need to exercise to build up your strength, or you may need to look into a different line of work.

Talk with your social worker right away about your desire to work. He or she can help you talk with your employer and make a plan to get back to your job. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) can help you if you need retraining, more school, or help finding a job.

What *I* can do to keep working:

- Tell my doctor that I want to work and not go on disability.
- Choose a work-friendly treatment, like home dialysis or a transplant, or work with my center to schedule my treatments around my job. Visit www.homedialysis.org to learn more.

- Tell my doctor and nurse about symptoms that keep me from working.
- Ask my doctor to suggest safe exercises I can do or refer me to a physical therapist to help me build up my strength.
- Work up to doing 30 minutes of exercise every day (start with as little as 5 minutes at a time), with my doctor's okay.
- Visit module 12 of Kidney School™: *Staying Active* at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more.
- Set goals for going to work and do my best to meet them.
- Ask my social worker for the VR phone number and call for an appointment.
- Read the booklet, *Employment: A Kidney Patient's Guide to Working and Paying for Treatment* from Life Options (www.lifeoptions.org).