



Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program
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Q: How long can people live on dialysis?

A: When you learned you had kidney failure, you may have thought that your life would end soon. Kidney failure can shorten your life—but there are people alive today who have been on dialysis for 30 years or more without a transplant.

These long-term patients learned to:

- Stay positive
- Learn all they could about kidney disease and dialysis
- Partner with their doctor and care team
- Not expect others to take care of them, but to take care of themselves

Many learned to do parts of their treatment, and most chose to do home dialysis. Although transplant is not a cure for kidney failure, having a working transplant can also help you live longer.

What *I* can do to live a long time on dialysis:

- Ask questions and learn more about my disease and its treatment.
- Learn how to do parts of my treatment, like figuring my fluid goal.

- Think about doing home dialysis or getting a kidney transplant.
- Get a fistula or graft instead of a catheter.
- Learn how to put in my own needles so my access lasts as long as possible.
- Keep track of my blood test levels, and be sure to keep them in the target range through diet and medications.
- Tell my doctor or nurse all the symptoms I have, so they can help me.
- Tell my social worker if I feel sad or blue, so I can get treatment.
- Talk with people who have stayed healthy on dialysis.
- Go to Kidney School™, at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more.