



# Kidney Q&A

0-3 months

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## Q: How can I get used to the changes in how my body looks?

**A:** If you asked any group of people if they like how they look, you'd probably find that most will find fault with something. But kidney failure and dialysis do cause some extra concerns for many people.

If you're on **peritoneal dialysis** (PD), you may worry that your stomach isn't flat, that your catheter is part of your body now, or that you may gain weight from the dialysis fluid.

If you're on **hemodialysis**, you may worry about what people think when they see your access. Your skin may look yellow from a buildup of wastes. You may have temporary hair loss—it will grow back.

It may help you to look on these changes as "battle scars" from a treatment that helps you stay alive. Some choose to hide their scars, and others let them show and tell people about them when they ask. You can't always change how your body looks, but how you think about it is up to you.

### What *I* can do to get used to my body changes?

- Talk with my social worker if I'm unhappy about how I look.
- Make sure I get enough dialysis to feel—and look—my best.
- Ask the dietitian how I can minimize weight gain on PD and still get enough nutrition.
- Talk to other patients about how they have coped with body changes from dialysis.
- Visit module 11 of Kidney School™: *Sexuality and Fertility* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more.