Q: How do I know if I am getting enough dialysis?

A: Your doctor will prescribe dialysis treatments that fit your needs, just as he or she would prescribe a drug. Your prescription is designed to make sure you get enough treatment to feel well and keep doing things you enjoy. To prescribe your treatment, your doctor starts with a careful look at your height and weight, lab tests, overall health, and remaining kidney function (if any).

1. Lab tests. Tests called urea reduction ratio (URR) or kinetic modeling (Kt/V) are used to measure how much dialysis is prescribed and how much you are getting. Your URR should be 70% or higher. Your Kt/V should be 1.2 or higher, or 2.0 or higher for a weekly Kt/V if you use peritoneal dialysis (PD).

2. How you feel. If you are getting good dialysis, you should feel good. If you are not getting enough dialysis, you may have symptoms like:
   - Weakness, fatigue, or passing out
   - Swelling in your hands, feet, or face
   - Poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, or a bad taste in your mouth
   - Yellow skin color (or darker skin color in those with dark skin)
   - Sleep problems
   - Itching

What I can do to get enough dialysis:

- Talk to my doctor if I think I’m not getting enough dialysis, to see if I need a prescription change.
- Know my dialysis prescription and track my URR or Kt/V. Right now, my URR is: ________% or my Kt/V is ________.
- Know my fluid limit and follow it. My fluid limit is ________ oz./day.
- Tell my care team if I eat better or exercise and gain “real” weight.
- Report symptoms that might mean I’m not getting enough treatment.
- Do all of my PD exchanges if I use PD, and use the right solution, as I was taught.
- Be on time for my treatments and stay until the end of each treatment.
- Ask my care team for help if I get restless toward the end of treatment.
- Make up time lost to machine alarms, late starts, or bathroom trips.
- Visit module 10 of Kidney School™: Getting Adequate Dialysis at www.kidneyschool.org to learn more.