



Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

Life Options Rehabilitation Program

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www.lifeoptions.org

How do I deal with the fatigue and hopelessness I sometimes feel?

Q: How do I deal with the fatigue and hopelessness I sometimes feel?

A: When your kidneys fail, wastes build up in your blood (*uremia*), and your body doesn't make enough red blood cells to get oxygen to your tissues (*anemia*). Uremia and anemia cause fatigue, so you may do less and rest more. When you stop using your muscles, they get weak. Soon, you may be so weak that you can't do the things you need to do, much less the things you enjoy. All of this can make you feel worthless and hopeless. But you can feel better!

Good dialysis can help: Dialysis removes the wastes that make you so tired. The better your dialysis, the more wastes are removed. This is why you need to get your full treatments. Your Kt/V or URR tests will tell you if you're getting enough dialysis.

Anemia treatment can help: Getting EPO and iron will help your body make more red blood cells—so more oxygen can get to your weak muscles, helping them to work better.

Exercise can help: If you've been inactive for a while, you'll need to start slowly to build up your muscles. As your muscles grow stronger, you'll be able to do more—which will help lift the dark cloud of hopelessness.

Goal-setting can help: Set small goals you think you can achieve and give yourself plenty of time to reach them. Just making progress can be rewarding.

Learning your options can help: Ask your care team and other patients for tips.

The more options you have, the more control you will feel over your life. Learning can open doors you didn't know existed. The more options you have, the more hopeful you become. Don't give up! Keep learning and making good choices. You won't regret it.

What I can do to have more energy and feel more hopeful:

- Tell my doctor how tired I feel on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (can't raise my head off a pillow). Right now, I feel this tired: __.
- Track my hemoglobin on my lab reports to see if my anemia is getting better, worse, or staying the same.
- Get every minute of dialysis that I'm prescribed at each treatment.
- Get every EPO shot and take my iron like I'm supposed to.
- Get physical activity daily and build up to 30 minutes 3 times a week.
- Tell my social worker if I feel depressed, and get treatment.
- Learn as much as I can about what I can do to help myself and do it.
- Get *Just the Facts: Hemodialysis Adequacy* and *Just the Facts: Anemia* from Life Options at www.lifeoptions.org.
- Visit module 5 of Kidney School™: *Coping with Kidney Disease* and module 12: *Staying Active with Kidney Disease* at www.kidneyschool.org.