



# Kidney Q&A

4-12 months

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Can I get together outside dialysis with staff and/or other patients?

## Q: Can I get together outside dialysis with staff and/or other patients?

**A:** You spend a lot of time with the staff and other patients at your dialysis clinic. You can be honest about your feelings with them. They know what you're going through. It's natural to think of them as an extended part of your family, or at least as friends. But if you ask a staff member to do something with you away from the clinic, don't be surprised if they say no.

Why might a staff person turn you down:

- Their professional code of ethics may keep them from doing social things with patients they treat.
- Your feelings could be hurt if your staff friend finds fault with something you're doing at dialysis.
- Other patients might feel that they get second class treatment if you are a staff member's special friend.
- Clinic staff don't want you to mistake your feelings of gratitude for love or sexual interest.

**Get together with other patients:** There are no rules to keep you from getting together with other patients outside of the clinic. Sometimes patients meet at the clinic and become buddies. Some clinics have group meetings, picnics, or other get-togethers to make it easier for people to meet and get to know others who are on dialysis. Having

friends and getting out with other people is a key factor in how well you do on dialysis.

### What I can do to build a support network:

- Have a good time with the staff at my clinic while I am at treatment.
- Talk to my social worker about clinic or community events for patients.
- Organize a patient and family event at my clinic or in your community.
- Visit module 5 of Kidney School™: *Coping with Kidney Disease* at [www.kidneyschool.org](http://www.kidneyschool.org) to learn more about the importance of support.