

## Need to go? How to treat and prevent constipation

Constipation is a common issue for kidney disease patients. It's uncomfortable and can make you feel bloated, which may lower your appetite. Prolonged constipation is a serious medical condition that may cause a blockage of stool or a tear in the lining of the bowel.

### Signs of constipation:

- Lack of bowel movement every 2 or 3 days
- Hard stools more than 25 percent of the time
- Straining during bowel movements more than 25 percent of the time

If constipation is an issue for you, contact your health care team. There are many ways to avoid constipation. See tips at right.



Katy Wilkens leads Northwest Kidney Centers' team of registered dietitians who can offer advice on how to avoid and relieve constipation.

## Be regular with these tips

### **Increase the fiber in your diet**

to make your stools softer and easier to pass. Increase slowly – too much fiber too fast causes gas, bloating and cramping.

Try high-fiber foods like whole grains, bran and fruits and vegetables. While fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber, many also contain high levels of potassium, so check with your dietitian about the amounts allowed for you.

### **Get daily physical activity.**

Exercise will increase blood circulation and muscle tone in your intestines, making it easier to regulate your bowels. Take a daily walk, stretch, do light housework.

### **Start a bowel routine.**

Take some time each day to spend in the bathroom. Always respond to your urges to have a bowel movement. Speak with your doctor about laxatives or stool softeners that may work for you.





Curtistine Bowens uses a laptop while dialyzing at our Seattle clinic at 15th and Cherry.

## Get connected: laptops and wireless Internet in your clinic

Thanks to a generous recent donation from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we have newer Lenovo laptops for you to use during dialysis. The computers run faster and have updated software, so you can surf the Internet, watch videos and play games with ease.

We also installed keyboard covers. These will help to prevent infection because they can be disinfected before and after use.

Please do not change any computer settings, including the desktop background. The background contains important user guidelines and contact information for questions or problems.

**Wireless Internet is also available for your personal laptop and mobile devices while you dialyze.**

**For help, contact [laptop@nwkidney.org](mailto:laptop@nwkidney.org) or 206-720-3850.**

## What's next? Could it be home dialysis, or a transplant? Find out at one of our free classes

### Home dialysis offers many benefits

On home dialysis, you're in charge of your treatments. You don't have to work around a clinic's schedule or worry about bad weather making it hard to get to your appointment on time. You gain independence and flexibility, and you can eat a more normal diet.

A Next Step Home Hemodialysis or Next Step PD class can tell you more.

### Is it time for a new kidney?

Our Next Step Transplant class will tell you all about the evaluation to qualify, living donor and deceased donor transplants, the transplant waitlist, and how to live well with a transplant.

Visit [www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org) to see a list of all our upcoming free classes.

## Win \$500 with your story: Renal Support Network essay contest

Enter the 2014 Renal Support Network essay contest and you could win \$500 and have your essay featured on the organization's website. Write a maximum of 750 words, and get your entry postmarked by Aug. 1. Anyone diagnosed with chronic kidney disease can enter.

**The theme is: Explain a choice you've made to improve your health and how it could benefit others.**

**Details at [www.rsnhope.org/essay-contest](http://www.rsnhope.org/essay-contest)**



West Seattle dialysis patient Jose Camacho with dentist Dr. Chris Pickel

## Chew on this: what you should know about gum disease

**People with kidney disease or diabetes are at risk for gum disease, also known as periodontal disease.**

Gum disease occurs when a sticky film of bacteria called plaque builds up and hardens over time to become tartar. The bacterial infection causes gums to look red or swollen; they may bleed after you brush your teeth. Left untreated, your gums may start to pull away from the teeth, leaving pockets that let in food and bacteria, causing more infections.

As a dialysis patient on fluid restrictions and prescription medications, you produce less saliva and may experience chronic dry mouth, which means your body can't eliminate mouth bacteria efficiently. Your weakened immune system puts you at higher risk for infections as well.

### **To prevent gum disease, make dental health a priority:**

- Brush twice a day
- Floss once a day
- Visit your dentist regularly – professional teeth cleaning will remove tartar, helping your teeth and gums stay healthy

## We asked, and you answered: we are getting better

The 2013 CAHPS survey shows that your experience as a Northwest Kidney Centers patient improved in many categories compared to 2012. As well, on these measures, you scored us better than other dialysis units across the country:

- ✓ Overall ratings for kidney doctors, dialysis staff and dialysis centers
- ✓ Nephrologist communication and caring
- ✓ Providing information to patients

Based on responses from you and others in your dialysis clinic, the staff will create an action plan to meet concerns. All of Northwest Kidney Centers will work on:

- ✓ Improving the way we handle problems
- ✓ Educating you on how to get off your dialysis machine in the event of an emergency at the center
- ✓ Providing you written information about your rights as a patient, and talking about what you should eat and drink

**The survey was mailed to 1,102 in-center patients and 46.1 percent of you responded. Thank you to those who took part. Medicare requires us to complete the CAHPS survey annually, so please look for the 2014 survey this fall.**



[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org)  
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**Pharmacy:** 206-343-4870 or 1-800-947-8902

Northwest Kidney Centers promotes the optimal health, quality of life and independence of people with kidney disease through patient care, education and research.



NORTHWEST

**Kidney Centers**

700 Broadway • Seattle WA 98122

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## Get all your prescriptions at our pharmacy

The expert staff can fill prescriptions for all your medications. Delivery is free.

**Phone:** 206-343-4870

**Toll-free:** 800-947-8902

[pharmacy@nwkidney.org](mailto:pharmacy@nwkidney.org)

## Our pharmacy now delivers to your dialysis center

The Northwest Kidney Centers pharmacy now offers free delivery to dialysis clinics. If you choose, you can pick up your prescriptions at your center when you come for dialysis. This is a great option if your mail is often inconvenient or unreliable.

When you order a prescription (via phone, refill line, email, etc.), let us know you want delivery to your dialysis center. Your prescriptions will arrive in a stapled bag. Dialysis staff will not open the bags and they won't know what's inside. They simply will deliver the package to you, and have you sign an acknowledgment card.



### Getting your prescription filled at our pharmacy is easier than ever, with three options for receiving your medications:

- 1. Pickup.** Pick up your prescription in person at the pharmacy at 700 Broadway, Seattle.
- 2. Mail.** Have your prescription mailed directly to your home.
- 3. Clinic delivery.** Have your prescription delivered to your unit, where you can pick it up at your next dialysis visit.

If you have questions about your prescription, please contact the pharmacy.