

Home Connection



Volume 7, Issue 2 · Summer 2016

Be water wise this summer



Swimming – should you take the plunge?

Thinking about swimming to beat the heat this summer? Sometimes that's a good idea and other times not. Know when the conditions are safe for you:

-  → **Only** swim in saltwater or chlorinated water. Avoid swimming in fresh water, such as lakes, rivers, hot tubs and spas, which can host bacteria that can infect your access.
- **Always** wear an ostomy bag over your access point to protect it when you swim. You can purchase ostomy bags through the Northwest Kidney Centers pharmacy.
- **Always** do exit site care right away after you swim! Remove the dressing and wash your exit site and/or shower afterwards.
-  No need to cover your fistula or graft when you swim. If you have a hemodialysis catheter, don't swim.



A splash of water on your wrists can cool you off. Home hemodialysis patient Molly Ramage chills at Juanita Beach Park in Kirkland.



Dehydration: a fluid situation to avoid

You're likely to be thirstier when it's hot and you're outside longer, and thus more likely to feel dehydrated. If you do get dehydrated, be careful about how much you drink.

Too much fluid is not good for you. It can collect in your lungs and affect your breathing, increase your blood pressure and put a strain on your heart. So check your fluid status every day.

To avoid feeling thirsty in the first place, stay cool and don't push yourself too hard. Avoid getting too much sun, wear a hat or wrap a damp bandana around your neck.

The amount of fluid you should take in each day depends on your urine output, dry weight and how often you dialyze. If you aren't sure about your optimum amount, ask your doctor.



Prevent infections when it's hot

Long summer days give PD patient Bub Dennis and his wife Midge more opportunities to do the things they enjoy. Here they are riding their horses at their home in Maple Valley.

Pay more attention to your exit site care

While the Northwest is known for its rain, summers here are dry and hot. That means more time outside and more activity. So you need to be extra careful with your exit site care:

- Do exit site care more often when you are active, especially if you get hot and sweaty.
- Change your dressing right away if it gets wet or soiled.
- Watch for redness, irritation or bleeding – signs of infection. Call the peritoneal dialysis team about tenderness or irritation.
- Remember to keep it dry. Infections are more likely to occur in warm and damp conditions.

Slow the air flow inside

Summer brings more dust, and more open windows and doors. Dirt floating in the air can be a source of infection. You lower your chance of infection by keeping the air in your house more still.

Block air flow during exchanges and sterile connections to limit the movement of any bacteria and prevent new bacteria from entering the system. About 10 minutes before treatment, close your windows and doors and turn off fans and air conditioners.

Three is the magic number

Be sure your home team has at least three ways to reach you: home, work and cell phone numbers, phone numbers of relatives, etc.

One-question quiz

What is the single best thing you can do to protect yourself from infection?

Answer: Wash your hands.

Bonus point if you said “Wash your hands and access before and after dialysis treatment.”

Hand washing tips

- Use liquid soap in the original container. Germs can live on bar soap.
- Wash vigorously for at least 30 seconds.
- Scrub fingers, around nails and between fingers.
- Dry well with paper towels. Germs like moisture.

Traveling this summer?



Be prepared

One bonus of doing your dialysis treatments at home is that it gives you more flexibility to travel. But be sure to get your care team involved two months before you go.

When traveling with PD or HH, remember to:

- Talk with your care team and order supplies 60 days in advance.
- Confirm your insurance coverage – check into the details of travel coverage – contact Northwest Kidney Centers patient finance department at 206-292-2771.
- Use the travel checklists – work with your caregiver so you don't overlook anything.

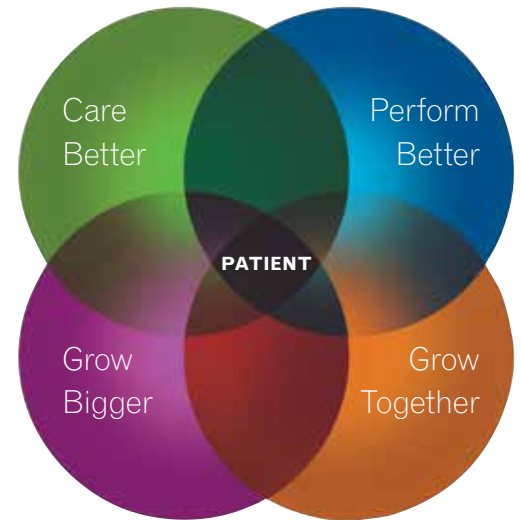
If you are on home hemodialysis, you can take along a NxStage System One machine or visit a dialysis center at your destination.

- If you fly with your machine, you can carry supplies or have them sent, depending on length of your trip. You can only take a NxStage System One machine in the contiguous United States. You won't be charged an airline baggage fee.
- If you decide on in-center visitor dialysis, your care team can help you identify sites and schedule your appointments.

Is your caregiver traveling?

Any time your caregiver is off duty, you may be able to receive care at a Northwest Kidney Centers clinic. Transportation support is available.

To take advantage of this service, get approval from your nephrologist and then schedule the treatment with the home team.



Northwest Kidney Centers has a plan with you at heart

Northwest Kidney Centers recently adopted a strategic plan to guide us through 2021. The strategic plan is the road map we will follow to serve you and carry out our mission. Our goals are:

Care Better - transform our care model and improve the health of the community

Perform Better - effectively manage the quality, safety and cost of our services

Grow Bigger - extend our footprint in services and sites

Grow Together - collaborate with local, regional and national partners

As we work toward these goals, we'll maintain our commitment to being a patient-centered organization.



Your Next Step?

Are you curious about whether a different form of treatment might work better for you? Learn more about home hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis and kidney transplants at our free Next Step classes. You can find a list of classes and descriptions at www.nwkidney.org/classes.



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Home hemodialysis unit: 206-292-2558 or 1-877-216-2558



Peritoneal dialysis unit: 206-292-2285 or 1-877-292-2285

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

Take advantage of our pharmacy



In addition to filling all of your prescriptions, our friendly pharmacy staff can give you expert consultations. You can refill online and get free delivery.

Phone: 206-343-4870
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So many berries, so little time  

The Pacific Northwest has the perfect climate for berries, the “fruits of the forest” as they are called in Europe. Berries are good sources of nutrients, be they blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, red currants or raspberries.

All red berries are brimming with vitamin C. Blueberries are high in antioxidants while raspberries and blackberries have lots of vitamin C, fiber and folic acid. These kidney-friendly foods are low in phosphorus. Their low potassium content means you can eat plenty on frequent dialysis.

Your berries don't have to get put into a high sugar dessert. Instead, enjoy fresh berries sprinkled over angel food cake, or a bowl of mixed berries with sour cream or whipped cream and a sprinkle of brown sugar.

