

## Take control of your blood pressure

Your blood pressure is one way to tell how well dialysis is working for you. Blood pressure is the force of blood on your artery walls and is reported as two numbers, such as 130/80. The top number (systolic) is the force when your heart beats, and the bottom number (diastolic) is the pressure between heartbeats.

Dialysis lowers your blood pressure by removing excess fluids and salt. Too much fluid and salt can raise your blood pressure. High blood pressure causes heart failure, heart attacks and strokes. Limit your fluid intake to the amount of urine you make in a day, plus three cups.

### Control your blood pressure by

- Knowing your blood pressure goal and your target weight (your weight without extra fluid). Ask your care team if you don't know.
- Not missing or shortening your dialysis treatments.
- Lowering your salt intake to keep your fluid gains low.
- Taking your blood pressure medications as prescribed.
- Getting 30 minutes of exercise five times a week.



Dancing is one way Harry Meyers stays fit. He's also been known to visit a roller-skating rink following treatments at our Lake Washington clinic.

## New medication coming to fight anemia

Northwest Kidney Centers is changing medication to ensure that your hemoglobin and hematocrit stay at healthy levels. Low Hgb/Hct levels are known as anemia. Currently we give you a drug during your treatments called Aranesp to increase your levels as necessary.

Starting this summer we will roll out a new medication called Mircera. It works like Aranesp, but lasts longer. As a result, you will need it less often. We anticipate all patients will be on Mircera by the end of the year. Talk to your doctor or your care team if you have questions.

## Get rid of those unwanted medications

You can safely dispose of unwanted medicines at drop-boxes throughout Washington. By dropping off your medicines, you ensure they won't accidentally end up in the hands of children or teenagers. Most prescription and over-the-counter medicines are accepted.

Visit [www.takebackyourmeds.org](http://www.takebackyourmeds.org) to find a drop-off box near you.



## Watch your mouth, especially if you may want a transplant

People with kidney disease or diabetes are at greater risk for gum disease. Gums may start to pull away from the teeth, leaving pockets that collect food and bacteria, which can lead to infections.

Fluid restrictions and medications you take as a dialysis patient mean you aren't able to eliminate mouth bacteria efficiently. A weakened immune system further increases the risk for infection.

### Make your dental health a priority:

- Brush twice a day
- Floss once a day
- Visit your dentist regularly – professional cleaning removes tartar and helps your teeth and gums stay healthy

A healthy mouth and gums are especially important if you want to receive a transplanted kidney. An infection in your mouth can spread to other parts of the body, including a new kidney. If that were to happen, it could jeopardize the success of your transplant. So you won't be allowed on the wait list if you have an active infection in your mouth or elsewhere.

Northwest Kidney Centers partners with Project Access Northwest to help low-income individuals get certain medical and dental care. Talk with your care team if you need help finding a dentist.



Who you gonna call?

## Call your doctor if your health changes suddenly

When unexpected health issues come up, call your primary physician or your nephrologist first. Your regular doctor knows you and your medical history the best. He or she can help you decide whether a trip to the emergency room is needed.

Visits to a hospital emergency room should only be for very serious or life-threatening problems. If you have a common illness or minor injury, a hospital emergency room is not the best place for you. Urgent care is a good alternative to an emergency room visit if your doctor is not available.



## You are the front line of infection prevention

Whether in a dialysis clinic or at home, washing your hands with soap and water is the single best way to prevent the spread of infections.

## New cleanup rule impacts dialysis schedules

A recent Medicare ruling requires patient stations to be completely empty before cleaning or setting up for the next patient. The new ruling affects our workflow because it takes more time. Staff and patients will need to make adjustments to comply with the ruling. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we've adjusted some dialysis patient schedules. Please talk to your care team if you need help with your schedule. You can get on a wait list for the time you desire if needed.



### Grilled lemon chicken kebabs

With the tangy taste of lemon, there is no need for salt. These high-protein kebabs are tasty hot or cold. They'll keep you going without giving you too much phosphorus or potassium.

#### Ingredients

- 4 pieces boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 2 lemons
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs (sage, thyme, etc.)
- 2 bay leaves, torn in half
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar

#### Preparation

Chop each thigh into chunky pieces and place in a bowl. Grate 1 teaspoon lemon zest and juice the remaining whole lemon. Add zest and juice to the bowl along with the oil, garlic, herbs and vinegar. Cover and marinate for at least 3 hours, or overnight. Slice the second lemon into 4 thick slices, and then cut each slice into 4 pieces. On a wooden skewer, alternate the lemon slices and the chicken pieces, packing as tight as possible, finishing off with a lemon piece. Repeat for each skewer. Grill in the oven, on the barbecue or on a countertop grill, until done, about 10 minutes each side. Makes 2 servings.

#### Nutritional Information

Calories: 362, Carbohydrates: 6 grams, Protein: 27 grams, Sodium: 119 milligrams, Potassium: 404 milligrams, Phosphorus: 238 milligrams



Former home hemo patient Hien Dung has more time to spend doing the things she loves since receiving a transplant in 2013.

### Next Step classes

Are you looking for more independence? Consider a transplant or dialysis treatments at home to give you more flexibility. Explore your options at one of our free Next Step classes.

Visit [www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org) to see a list of upcoming dates and sites.



## Our pharmacy delivers

Not only can you get expert advice from our pharmacists on your medications, you can have your prescriptions delivered to your clinic at no cost.

### Order by phone

206-343-4870

1-800-947-8902 toll-free

### Online

[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org).



[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org)  
[pr@nwkidney.org](mailto:pr@nwkidney.org)  
206-292-2771



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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.



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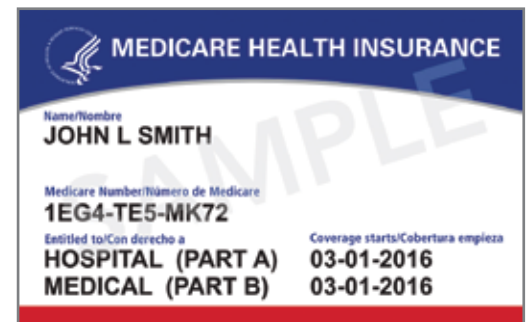
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## Look for a new Medicare card in the mail this summer

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has started distributing more than 60 million new Medicare cards. Washington state subscribers will receive their new cards this summer. Your new card will not include your Social Security number. Instead, to prevent identity theft and illegal use of services, the card will have a new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier number unique to you.

So be on the lookout for your new card after June. It will be automatically sent to you. Your health insurance coverage is not dependent on your new card or the new identifying number. When you do get your new card, please present it to each of your providers of service to confirm your new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier number.



**Coming soon if you  
are on Medicare**