

# Home Connection

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## Getting back to work



One of the many good things about dialyzing at home is the flexibility, which can be a big help if you're looking for work, holding your current job or want to learn new skills.

Vocational resources and support are available to patients between ages 18 and 64 who receive Social Security because of disability. About 15 percent of patients at Northwest Kidney Centers are working or in school, and the benefits of being employed are significant.

"Patients can learn new skills, find available jobs, improve financial independence and get help keeping their new jobs," says Jan Omri, home program manager at Northwest Kidney Centers.

If you've been considering work or school possibilities, the benefits speak for themselves.



Adrian Parker works at Virginia Mason Medical Center's Digestive Disease Institute. He does PD at home in Seattle.

## The benefits

- Less financial stress. Social Security Disability Income pays only about 35 percent of the average salary
- Better health and more energy
- Fewer and shorter hospital stays
- Less depressed and live longer
- Patients who are "active" in their state's Vocational Rehabilitation program when transplanted receive coverage for five additional years of transplant medicines

## Training support

Start by asking your social worker for help finding a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor through a local VR office or employment network. You can also call 866-968-7842 or visit <https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp> to find a VR counselor.

The VR counselor will start by creating an individualized employment or education plan for you. VR counselors also help you find a job and keep it, get training and understand how work impacts your Social Security benefits.

Keep your social worker updated as you work with your VR counselor and don't hesitate to ask for help in reaching your goals.

## Why completing advance directives matters

Advance directives are legal documents that declare your health care wishes if you cannot speak for yourself. They concern only health care, not money or property.

You don't need a lawyer to complete advance directives. Ask your social worker for forms. Give copies to your doctors, care team and loved ones.

You can make new advance directives as desired. Dispose of old forms and give new copies to family, friends and health care providers.

In Washington, family members can make care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so. A judge may decide your care if you have no relatives.



### Advance directives



#### **Durable power of attorney.**

Appoints a person to make your medical decisions. Must be witnessed by two people or notarized.



#### **Physician order for life-sustaining treatment (POLST).**

States your treatment wishes if your heart stops or if you stop breathing. You and your doctor sign this form.



**Living will.** Clarifies the end-of-life care you want, such as type of life support. You can also choose no life support, but to be kept comfortable.

## PD support group now open to home hemo patients too



All home program patients are welcome to attend what formerly was a support group for PD patients, their families and caregivers. The group meets the third Monday of every month at Northwest Kidney Centers Renton clinic, 602 Oakesdale Ave. SW.

Come ready to taste some delicious kidney-friendly food — meetings open with a cooking demonstration by one of our dietitians. Then the group discusses a variety of topics from dialysis and mental health to social and health-related subjects.

The next meetings will be March 18 and April 15, from 1 to 3 p.m. To learn more, contact Emily Tabor at 425-203-5235 or [emily.tabor@nwkidney.org](mailto:emily.tabor@nwkidney.org).

**“Joining a support group really helps people connect and not feel their journey is so individualized. There are other people with similar journeys. Support groups also help people get a sense of community that can be challenging when you’re getting treatment at home.”**

— Emily Tabor, Northwest Kidney Centers social worker



### Clean hands save lives

Washing your hands is the best way to prevent the spread of infections.

The keys to hand washing:

- Scrub hands with soap for at least 30 seconds.
- Clean your fingers, between your fingers and around your nails.
- Dry with paper towels.



Dietitians like Renin Cassidy can provide nutrition counseling. If you are experiencing fatigue and think your diet is a contributing factor, work with your dietitian to figure it out.

## Feeling worn out? Find out why HH PD

Dialysis patients are often tired, and several factors may cause it — emotional and physical concerns as well as dialysis itself.

The most likely reason is anemia, a lack of red blood cells causing reduced oxygen flow through your body. Dialysis decreases red blood cells. Mircera helps your body produce more. High red blood cell levels, however, increase your risk of stroke or heart attack.

Because our bodies use iron to produce red blood cells, you can improve your energy level either with a small increase of red blood cells or an increase in the amount of iron:

- Exercise regularly – start slowly and increase incrementally
- Take a water-soluble multivitamin daily
- Eat at least 3 ounces of red meat multiple times a week

Ask your dietitian about ways to be more active and what vitamins and foods can affect your body's ability to absorb iron.

Depression or sleep issues are other possible causes. Talk with your social worker if you are feeling down or suspect you are depressed. If machine alarms are interrupting your sleep, talk with your care team about adjustments. If you think other issues are affecting your sleep, ask your care team and request the Trouble Sleeping brochure.

Don't let fatigue get in your way. Your care team can help.



## Equipment or supply failure? Call Baxter or NxStage first, then us

If you ever experience supply or machine problems, call Baxter or NxStage and give them your serial or lot number. In most cases, supplies lost due to equipment failure will be replaced, but manufacturers can't send those supplies if you don't report the trouble.

Baxter machine issues: 800-553-6898;  
supply issues: 800-284-4060

NxStage: 866-697-8243

After you've let the supplier know, call your home care team so that we also know.



## Go all in on research

You can further science and improve kidney treatment by participating in research. It can be easy and interesting.

Learn more or add your name to the registry at the Kidney Research Institute: <http://kri.washington.edu/communityconnection>.





## Please join us

### American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure

Saturday, May 4

Chateau Ste. Michelle,  
Woodinville

### Northwest Kidney Centers Breakfast of Hope

Thursday, May 9

7:30 - 8:45 a.m.

Westin Seattle



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



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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.



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Pierre Newsome

“Getting a transplant gave me back time, and for me, time is a commodity. But the main things were getting my energy back and feeling healthy. When you’re on dialysis, you can forget what ‘healthy’ is. Feeling better physically and having more energy also improves your outlook on things.”

— Pierre Newsome, former dialysis patient and  
transplant recipient

## Is a transplant your Next Step?

A free class at Northwest Kidney Centers can help you determine what’s best. Visit [www.nwkidney.org/classes](http://www.nwkidney.org/classes) for topics, times and locations.