

## Enjoy the fruits of summer

There are so many wonderful fruits available in the summer, and fresh fruit is a healthy choice, as long as you are careful with those high in potassium. Potassium is an important mineral in our bodies, but too much or too little potassium can be dangerous.

Healthy kidneys and dialysis remove extra potassium, but it can build up between treatments for patients who dialyze in-center.

If you are on home hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis you probably don't have to limit potassium. Both of these methods remove more potassium than does dialysis in a clinic. Home dialysis also allows the flexibility to do more treatments which removes more potassium.

The best approach is to track your potassium lab results and keep your values between 3.5 and 5.5.

If you need to cut down or increase your potassium, talk with your dietitian and ask about Northwest Kidney Centers "Potassium" brochure, "Exotic Fruits and Vegetables" brochure and the tip sheet on "High Potassium Fruits."



David Becker and his wife, Shirleen, enjoy a variety of fruits. David gets dialysis at our Scribner clinic.

## Potassium: What's high, what's low

### High Potassium (1 serving a day)

Apricots  
Nectarine  
Peaches

### Medium Potassium (2 servings a day)

Cantaloupe  
Cherries  
Honeydew melon  
Pear  
Plums  
Watermelon

### Low Potassium (3 servings a day)

Blueberries  
Raspberries  
Rhubarb  
Strawberries

## Introducing Health Connection

We've combined our patient newsletters, Home Connection and Dialysis Connection, into a single source for everyone on dialysis at Northwest Kidney Centers. Health Connection will come to you twice a year with valuable information to support your care and well-being.



Dialysis technician Galina Mukomol at our Federal Way East clinic.

## Computer upgrade this summer will help us care better for you

Northwest Kidney Centers is upgrading its electronic medical record (EMR). We will start using this new system, Clarity, on July 1.

If you get dialysis in one of our clinics, you do not need to do anything. If you use home hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis, we'll show you new communication features at your June clinic visit.

We have spent more than a year to get the new system ready. It will:

- Decrease downtime
- Help us coordinate better with your other health care providers
- Cut duplication in our record-keeping
- Allow us to spend more time interacting with you, rather than the computer

Around the rollout, you may see unfamiliar staff in your clinic — we'll have extra help during July to ensure a smooth transition. If you have any questions, ask anyone on your care team in the clinic about this improvement.



## Next Step classes

Looking for more independence? Flexibility? Community? Explore your options at one of Northwest Kidney Centers' free Next Step classes about alternate treatments for kidney failure. Visit [www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org) to see a list of upcoming dates and sites.

## Patient survey coming to in-center patients in May

People who get dialysis in one of our clinics should look for a patient survey in their U.S. Mail box in May. The annual survey for home patients is scheduled for fall. Your feedback is important because it helps us improve the quality of our services. Please complete the survey. Thank you!



A collaboration between  
Northwest Kidney Centers and UW Medicine

## Ready for research

Contribute to evolving science by signing up to take part in studies with the Kidney Research Institute. To learn more, visit <http://kri.washington.edu/communityconnection>.



## At home or away, wash your hands

Whether you are on vacation, at home or at the dialysis clinic, hand washing with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of infections.



Former PD patient David Lum washing at home in Renton. He received a transplant in 2018.



## Travel plans this summer?

Talk with your unit coordinator or social worker at least a month before you want to leave – and definitely before you buy tickets. They can help you plan and prepare. Don't delay – some travel takes over a month to plan.

**If you get dialysis in a clinic.** To find a dialysis center at your destination, go to [www.medicare.gov/dialysisfacilitycompare](http://www.medicare.gov/dialysisfacilitycompare) or ask your care team for help. Make appointments as soon as you know your travel dates and let your care team know.

**Home hemodialysis patients.** Take your machine with you or schedule treatment at a dialysis center at your destination (see above). Northwest Kidney Centers has a travel case for loan. NxStage can ship cartridges, dialysate bags and warmer bags; you bring the rest. Call NxStage at 866-697-8243.

**PD patients.** Talk to your nurse care manager about supplies you'll need. Call Baxter HomeCare Services at 800-284-4060 to place your travel order; they will want your travel dates, where you'll stay and which supplies you need. Don't order too much – you can't return extras.

## Be prepared for the unexpected

- Keep the phone number of your dialysis center handy.
- Make sure the center has your current phone number. Tell your care team when your phone number or emergency contacts change.
- If you regularly drive yourself or have a family member help get you to dialysis, make backup transportation plans right away. Don't wait for the next unexpected situation. If you live in King County, apply for Access transportation now so you can schedule rides when necessary. Enrollment can take 3 weeks. Your social worker can help with transportation services.



Jamale Thompson gets dialysis at our Seattle clinic.



## Take advantage of our specialized pharmacy

Have prescriptions delivered to your home or clinic at no cost and get expert advice from our pharmacists. Order online at [www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org) or by phone at 206-343-4870 or 1-800-947-8902 toll-free.



[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org)  
[pr@nwkidney.org](mailto:pr@nwkidney.org)



**Northwest Kidney Centers:** 206-292-2771

**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.



NORTHWEST

**Kidney Centers**

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## Help us understand your goals

Health care is often directed to “what’s the matter with you” instead of “what matters to you.” Northwest Kidney Centers staff will focus on changing that during the month of June.

Someone on your care team may ask you to fill out a short questionnaire about what’s important in your life. Your care team will work to help you reach the goals that matter.

Everyone will answer differently. What matters to you may be time with your grandchildren, getting to church, staying in your home, avoiding cramps. Another person’s list may be very different.

June 6 is officially What Matters To You Day around the world.

Watch a video that tells more: <https://bit.ly/2Gz1Raz>

