HD: course and arrangements

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Dear patient,

This leaflet was written to provide you with more information about the course of and arrangements for hemodialysis. If you have any questions, please note them down and ask the dialysis nurse or doctor. The contact details are given on the back of this leaflet.

The Department of Nephrology

Hemodialysis

- Social services will contact you before dialysis is begun. We will discuss whether you can come to the dialysis clinic by your own means of transport or by a patient transport service (possibly in consultation with your health insurance fund). During this conversation, further arrangements will be made regarding the expected time, possible meals, etc.

- Bear in mind that patient transport trips may be combined at the request of the health insurance fund, and that other patients will be picked up, both on the way to the hospital and back home.

- A sandwich may be served before or after dialysis if you so choose. If desired, diabetic patients may have breakfast.

- You will then be asked to wait in the waiting room/dining room. You will be weighed and escorted to the appropriate unit in the dialysis room. It is not permitted to bring your own blankets, pillows, etc. to dialysis.

- Before entering, you must disinfect your hands. Hand sanitisers are available at the entrance to the waiting room/dining room and the dialysis room.

- The nurse will compare your current weight with your target weight. This allows us to check how much weight you have gained between dialysis sessions. This indicates how much fluid must be withdrawn during dialysis via the dialysis machine.

- The nurse in charge will first check your identity. The nurse will check your name, date of birth and a photo in the dialysis file to make sure you are the right patient. We will then check your blood pressure and pulse, and the dialysis nurse will set up the dialysis machine according to a doctor's instructions.

- The fistula and/or catheter are carefully examined for infection, redness, bleeding, etc.

- After thorough disinfection of your arm, the fistula will be punctured or the catheter connected. You will then be connected to the dialysis machine when the lines are joined to the needles or catheter.

- A dialysis session is nearly painless. You can read, watch TV, listen to music, work on your laptop, have a chat with fellow patients, etc.

- You are never alone during dialysis. Specialist nurses are always present. You can speak to them at any time.

- A dialysis doctor will visit you during every dialysis session to monitor you.

- At the end of the dialysis session, the blood is pumped back and the lines are disconnected.

- If dialysis is done through a fistula, the needle is removed after the lines are disconnected. Either you press on the puncture site yourself, or the nurse places a clamp on your fistula, for a period of 15 to 20 minutes. A sterile compress and a plaster are then applied, which you remove the next day at the latest. It's also a good idea to wash your fistula arm well the next day.

- If dialysis is done through a catheter, after the lines have been disconnected, a product called Taurolock is injected in a sterile manner to ensure the catheter remains open. The catheter is then wrapped in a compress with a stretch bandage around it.

- The dialysis session is concluded with a check of your blood pressure, pulse, body weight and intake of vitamin B and folic acid.

- Don't forget to disinfect your hands when leaving the room.

- After your dialysis session, you can wait in the waiting room/dining room again until your transport operator comes to pick you up. If you were on dialysis in the morning, you can have a sandwich there at lunchtime.

Complications

It sometimes happens that a lot of fluid has to be removed. This can cause a drop in blood pressure or cramps in the legs. You can usually feel this coming on – you feel unwell or nauseous, or you start yawning or sweating. You can also get pain in your legs. Report this to the nurse immediately. The discomfort can be resolved quickly with an adjustment of the treatment.
After dialysis treatment, it is normal to feel a little tired.
If you experience shortness of breath, fever, vomiting, cramps, muscle weakness, etc., it is best to always report this before the next dialysis session.
In case of serious medical problems at home, do not wait until the next dialysis session. Contact the dialysis clinic immediately or go to the AZ Delta emergency department.

Hemodialysis appointments

- Always wait in the dialysis clinic waiting room/dining room until the nurse comes to get you.

- The various transport operators will always receive an email with the time your session ends so that they know when to pick you up.

- If dialysis is not possible at a certain time due to family reasons such as a funeral or wedding, please inform the nurse. The time or day of dialysis can be adjusted in consultation with you.

- You should communicate your travel plans to the dialysis nurse in advance. This way, the dialysis managers can find out whether dialysis can be organised elsewhere in this country or abroad.

- You should discuss any other consultations or appointments in the hospital with the dialysis nurse. This will help us keep track of them and make sure you arrive without problems and on time.

- You should always inform the dialysis nurse about any changes to your home medication or medication that your GP has newly prescribed to you, as this may affect your dialysis.

- Every month, you will receive a form on which to record the medication you are taking. This information will then be added to your dialysis file.

- Every six months, an X-ray of your lungs will be taken to determine your body's fluid balance – whether there is too much or too little body fluid. We refer to this as being 'overfilled' or 'underfilled'. We can adjust your target weight based on the result. Your body weight will then be slightly increased or decreased.

- Other periodic examinations include an electrocardiogram or ECG (annually), quarterly urine collection, an annual eye exam for diabetic patients and monthly or quarterly fistula flow rate measurements for some patients.

Notes

Contact

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Info: Department of Nephrology

Physicians

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