



# HEALTH & H.O.P.E.

HELP ON PROCESSING EVERYTHING DIALYSIS

## August is National Immunization Awareness Month

Vaccinations, mostly given as a shot, protect you from diseases. Some of these diseases can make you very sick. Three vaccines many people with kidney disease get are COVID-19, influenza, and pneumococcal.

**COVID-19** – COVID-19 vaccines help your body develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19. If you are vaccinated and get COVID-19 disease, you will be much less likely to get very sick, be hospitalized or die. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious problems from COVID-19 disease.

**Influenza** – The influenza vaccine, also known as “the flu shot,” helps

prevent the flu. You can get the flu virus from germs through every day, person-to-person contact. Flu can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Symptoms can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue (tiredness). You need a flu shot every year.

**Pneumococcal** – Vaccines are the best way to prevent pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcal pneumonia causes an estimated 150,000 hospitalizations each year in the United States. Pneumonia and the problems it can cause are deadly, and the risk of death is higher in people on dialysis. Often, symptoms of pneumonia begin slowly. They include high fever, chills, coughing,



headaches, trouble breathing, chest pains and muscle aches.

Talk with your healthcare team about which vaccinations you need and when you should receive them so you can remain as healthy as possible.

## August 1 – National Minority Donor Awareness Day

National Minority Donor awareness is celebrated on August 1st as a way of bringing light to the need for minority donors, encouraging others to register as donors, and acknowledging minorities who have donated. Within the African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islander American communities, there is

a serious shortage of transplants. Kidneys are the greatest organ in demand across the country.

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, about 63% of minorities are currently on the transplant waitlist for a kidney and only about 30% of minorities make up the

donor population. In 2021, 37% of minorities received a kidney living donor transplant. To break it down further, only 13% of African Americans, 17% of Hispanic/Latino, and 6% of Asian patients received a transplant from a living donor.

It is not unusual for someone to receive a kidney transplant from another racial or ethnic group, but the transplant success rate increases dramatically when

## National Minority Donor, cont'd.

the kidney is matched between members of the same ethnic background. Having a well-matched living donor is the fastest way to get a kidney transplant. Waiting for a deceased kidney to become available can be 3-5 years or even longer!

Check out the resources below to learn more about living donation and the financial resources that are available:

[American Kidney Fund](#)

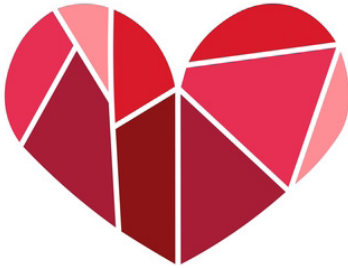
[American Transplant Foundation](#)

[National Living Donor Assistance Center](#)

[Transplant Living Financial Resources](#)

[Infórmate](#) – Bilingual website to educate the Hispanic/Latino community about living donation

**NATIONAL  
MINORITY  
DONOR  
AWARENESS  
DAY**



## Home Dialysis – Freedom to Travel



If you love to travel, home dialysis can give you this freedom! Some patients think that traveling with Home Dialysis is not an option because of the machine or supplies needed, but traveling with home dialysis is easier than you might think. It is all about planning and being prepared, and your care team can help you arrange your treatment needs to fit into your travel plans. See this couple's journey of traveling in an RV with a dialysis machine, and how they have managed to inspire others by taking their dialysis on the road:

### [Not Just Along for the Ride](#)

Patients have many options when it comes to traveling with home dialysis. You can schedule your treatments at a local dialysis facility at your destination, or you can ask your care team to ship your dialysis supplies to your travel destination.

With the holiday season peaking around the corner, this may be the perfect time for you to learn more about home dialysis to get the flexibility to travel and see family. You can even enjoy some of the other perks of more frequent home dialysis, like fewer dietary restrictions.

Below are some resources to help with traveling while on home dialysis:

[Be Prepared When You Fly with a Dialysis Machine](#)

[My Home Dialysis Checklist](#)

[Travel Tips: A Guide for Kidney Patients](#)



## Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits

The summer heat is here and so are thirsty days. As we go about our day, it's easy to drink plenty of fluids to cool ourselves and replenish our body. However, when our kidneys are sick, it's hard for our body to get rid of extra fluids. Dialysis patients

can easily retain liquids, which may trigger complications such as fluid overload, high blood pressure, shortness of breath, and electrolyte imbalances. When left unattended, these complications can make you end up in the emergency room (ER)

and potentially hospitalized. Talk to your dialysis team about how you can help them recognize early signs and symptoms of complications and get them addressed before they make you sick. Review the

*continued on page 3*

## Hospitalizations, cont'd.

resource below to learn more about how high blood pressure can affect other systems in your body.

## Effects of Hypertension

### Exercise and Dialysis Patients

First and foremost, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Exercise is important for the health of your body but also for the health of your mind. Exercise makes it

easier for people to get around, better blood pressure, better muscle strength, better sleep, and helps with controlling weight. Exercise does not have to be push-ups, sit ups, lifting weights. It can be slow stretching exercises, taking a walk around the block, gardening, water exercises, dancing, or yoga. You will need to learn the type of exercise that is best for you, the number of minutes to exercise each time, how often you need to exercise, and how hard the workout should be. These are questions you should be asking your doctor and

working with him/her to create an exercise plan.

Here are some resources to help you create your new exercise program:  
Life Options – [A Guide for People on Dialysis](#)

ESRD NCC – [Staying Fit with Kidney Disease](#)

National Kidney Foundation – [Kidney.org](#)

## Become Involved

As a dialysis or transplant patient, or caregiver there are several ways at your facility, Network, and national level you can get involved in helping other renal patients.

### Facility Patient Representative (FPR)

Each dialysis facility should have at least one FPR. FPRs may be asked to help with focus groups for the Network, act as mentors to other patients, distribute educational materials, help with lobby days, and suggest topics for patient meetings. To learn more about becoming a FPR, speak with your facility's social worker or download the Network FPR Toolkit ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) from our website.

### Peer Mentor

A peer mentor provides support and experiences to other renal patients who have questions about dialysis or transplant. A mentor and mentee can meet in person at their dialysis facility (check with your facility administrator to see

if pandemic policies will allow), a phone call, or virtual meetings. For more information on becoming a mentor, go to [ESRDNCC.org](#) or contact Debbie O'Daniel, ESRD Network, at 1-877-886-4435.

### Renal Coalition

Join a renal coalition through the Networks. Provide a patient's voice in areas of Depression, Vaccination, Home Dialysis, Transplant, Hospitalization, Patient and Family Engagement, and Long-Term Care. To learn more about the different coalitions and to volunteer, please use the contact information listed below.

**Vaccination** – Kristi Durham, [kristi.durham@allianthealth.org](mailto:kristi.durham@allianthealth.org)

**Home Dialysis** – Maryam Alabood, [maryam.alabood@allianthealth.org](mailto:maryam.alabood@allianthealth.org)

**Transplant** – Arlandra Taylor, [arlandra.taylor@allianthealth.org](mailto:arlandra.taylor@allianthealth.org)

**Hospitalizations** – Dany Anchia, [dany.anchia@allianthealth.org](mailto:dany.anchia@allianthealth.org)

This year, the Network is going to join existing community coalitions

and partner with organizations that are already doing work with hospitals and other acute settings. Our goal is to provide a dialysis perspective to these providers and share barriers and solutions for better care for ESRD patients. The Network will advocate for a patient perspective. Stay tuned for meeting dates. Thank you for all you do.

**Patient and Family Engagement** – Debbie O'Daniel, [debbie.odaniel@allianthealth.org](mailto:debbie.odaniel@allianthealth.org)



To file a grievance, contact the following agencies:

ESRD Network 8 - Phone: 1-877-936-9260; Email: [nw8info@allianthealth.org](mailto:nw8info@allianthealth.org); Mail: 775 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite 310, Ridgeland, MS 39157; Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw8/> – For patients and facilities in AL, MS, TN

**ESRD Network 14** – Office: 972-503-3215; fax: 972-503-3219; Toll-free: 877-886-4435; Email: [nw14info@allianthealth.org](mailto:nw14info@allianthealth.org); Mail: 4099 McEwen Rd, Suite 820 Dallas, TX 75244; Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw14/> - For patients and facilities in TX