



Training for Retention: Supporting and Sustaining Home Dialysis Patients

Supporting home dialysis patients requires ongoing commitment, much like providing in-center care. Education should not stop after initial training but must continue throughout the patient's home journey. A successful home dialysis program relies on a dedicated support team. Below are actionable strategies for retaining home dialysis patients.



Address support needs at home. Many patients cite insufficient support at home as a primary reason for not pursuing home dialysis. Ensure the patient has reliable support and involve family members or care partners in all appointments and ongoing training. For solo patients, provide additional touchpoints, such as educational materials via mail, regular phone calls, or telehealth consultations, if available.



Offer respite care options. Collaborate with an in-center dialysis facility near the patient's home to arrange for respite care when needed. Inform patients and care partners that this option is available. Respite care can provide relief from the demands of home dialysis, especially during vacations or challenging times.



Support the patient's interests. Learn what motivated the patient to choose home dialysis. For example, if their goal was to participate in family activities, ask about their experiences. If they report a lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities, treat this as a red flag and investigate further to provide appropriate support.



Monitor after hospitalizations and missed treatments. Closely follow up with patients after any hospitalizations or missed dialysis treatments, as these can signal a need for additional assistance, reassurance, or retraining.



Encourage reporting of health changes. Teach patients or caregivers to report any illnesses, hospital stays, or rehabilitation plans after hospitalization. Discuss alternative dialysis options where needed. Be prepared with information on hospitals or skilled nursing facilities that offer peritoneal dialysis (PD) services.



Conduct home visits. Schedule a home visit after the patient completes training. Check their supply levels to ensure they have sufficient—but not excessive—stock, addressing any storage concerns. Assess mobility barriers, particularly for automated peritoneal dialysis (APD) patients. For those requiring longer treatment sessions, consider providing line extensions to enable them to engage in other activities.



Encourage peer support. Connect the patient with peer support groups. Socialization and shared experiences with others in similar situations can enhance motivation and reduce feelings of isolation. Check out the websites below for information about peer support groups.

ESRD Support Group Resources

American Association of Kidney Patients: Support Group Resources: <https://aakp.org/location/texas/>

National Kidney Foundation:

- <https://www.kidney.org/patients/peers>
- <https://www.kidney.org/professionals/Peers>

Peers for Progress: <http://peersforprogress.org/take-action/start-a-program>