

FACT SHEET

Kidney replacement treatments

Options to stay healthy when kidneys stop working.

When kidneys stop working well, people may need something called renal replacement therapy (RRT). These treatments do the job of the kidneys. They clean the blood by removing waste, extra water, and harmful chemicals.

There are three main types of RRT:

Hemodialysis (HD)

A dialysis machine filters your blood to remove waste and extra fluid. This happens at a dialysis center or sometimes at home. You'll need a small surgery before starting to create a spot for the blood to go in and out.

Peritoneal dialysis (PD)

This type of treatment uses the lining of your stomach to clean your blood. A special liquid is put into your stomach, and it pulls out the waste. This can be done at home, which gives you more freedom.

Kidney transplant

A healthy kidney from another person (a donor) is surgically put into your body. You will need to take medicine every day so your body doesn't reject the new kidney. Not everyone can get a transplant, so doctors will check if it's a good choice for you.

Surgery for dialysis access

Before you start dialysis, doctors need to make a way to connect your body to the dialysis machine or to add a tube in your stomach. Here are the main types:

Hemodialysis access

- **AV fistula:** A doctor connects a vein and artery in your arm. It takes 2-3 months to heal but lasts the longest and has fewer problems.
- **AV graft:** A soft tube is used to connect the vein and artery. It heals faster (2-3 weeks) but might not last as long.
- **Central line (CVC):** A tube placed in a big vein in your neck or chest. It's used only for a short time and has a higher risk of infection.

Peritoneal dialysis access

- A soft tube is surgically placed in your stomach to let fluid in and out.

Choosing the right RRT for you

When it's time to choose RRT, you'll need to think about:

- ✓ What type of dialysis you want
- ✓ Where you want to do it (clinic or home)
- ✓ If you're a good match for a kidney transplant

Talk with your health care team and ask questions. They'll help you choose the best treatment for your body, your lifestyle, and your needs. It's also okay to decide not to start or to stop RRT if that's what's right for you.

Want to learn more?

For more information, visit these trusted resources:

National Kidney Foundation: www.kidney.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov

American Society of Nephrology: www.asn-online.org

Kidney Care Coaches: www.kidneycarecoaches.com

