

# Dialysis Adequacy

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## What is dialysis?

Dialysis is a kidney replacement therapy that removes waste (“urea”), salt and excess fluid from the blood when the kidney can no longer function. Dialysis improves people’s outcomes and sustains life. Getting the amount of dialysis your doctor recommends will decrease your hospital stays and improve your quality of life.

## What is dialysis adequacy?

Dialysis adequacy means getting enough dialysis. Your dialysis clinic takes monthly blood tests to determine if you are receiving enough dialysis. You may not experience symptoms from insufficient dialysis right away, but it can shorten your life, which is why it is important to test for adequate dialysis often.

## What is Kt/V and why is it important?

One test for measuring if you are receiving adequate dialysis is “Kt/V”. This test measures how much “urea” (waste) is removed during dialysis.

Hemodialysis patients should have a Kt/v of 1.4 and Peritoneal dialysis patients strive for a Kt/V of 1.7

Symbol:	Stand for:	Means:
K	Clearance	The amount of wastes removed
t	Time	The length of time dialysis lasts
V	Volume	The volume of water in your body

## What happens when I miss or shorten dialysis?

These symptoms may vary between people:

- Uremia: confusion, dizziness, bad taste in mouth, and vomiting
- Edema: swelling in hands, feet, face, or heart
- Anemia: low energy and tiredness

- Bone disease: weakened and brittle bones
- Electrolyte imbalance: seizures, numbness, muscle spasms and low energy
- Volume overload: bloating, weight gain, difficulty breathing, coughing, and cramping during treatment
- Cardiac problems: irregular heart beat and heart stopping

### **Why am I at risk?**

If you miss or shorten your treatments you may have serious complications such as poor mental functioning, heart problems, and diminished quality of life. Skipping one treatment per month can lead to more hospital stays and is life-threatening.

### **How do I avoid these symptoms?**

- Arrive on time for your appointment.
- Stay for your full treatment.
- Make other appointments on non-dialysis days.
- Talk to your doctor and dialysis social worker about your situation and circumstances affecting you.
- Schedule your life around dialysis. Think of it like a prescription that you cannot live without.

### **For More Information:**

- Midwest Kidney Network: <http://www.esrdnet11.org>
- The Renal Network: <http://www.therenalnetwork.org>
- Kidney School: <http://www.kidneyschool.org>

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