

Get Involved in Your Care!

Nobody knows how you feel and what you need better than you! This is why you should be involved in your care. Patients who help make decisions about their care have more control and feel better about the future, and there are many different ways that you can become involved.

One of the best ways to be involved is to participate in your plan-of-care meetings. Plan-of-care meetings give you an opportunity to learn more about your treatment plan, ask questions, and share with your care team what is important to you. These are held at least once a year and include your entire care team and any care partner you wish to invite. You may also request a plan-of-care meeting any time that you have concerns.

You may also attend support group meetings

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New Medicare Cards

THE FACTS

On April 1, 2018, Medicare started a year-long project to replace all current Medicare cards for beneficiaries by converting to alphanumeric ID numbers. Currently, your ID number is your social security number. New Medicare cards without social security numbers are being distributed from April 2018 to April 2019. The new Medicare card will come to you in the mail. You don't need to request it or do anything. It will just show up. Your existing card is good until the new one shows up.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Medicare will never call you unless you ask them to. Medicare does all communications by mail unless you ask them to call.

- Same goes for anybody saying they "work with Medicare to make sure you get everything you are entitled to."
- **DO NOT** give out information over the phone.
- Spread the word and feel free to share these notes.

Use your answering machine to screen calls or just don't answer a number you don't recognize.

If this happens to you, your friends, or loved ones, and personal info has been given out, (which happens considerably more often than you think), immediately take action to protect yourself against identity theft.

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with other patients just like you. Support group meetings allow you to meet other people who know exactly what it is like to have kidney disease. During support group meetings, you can share your experiences and learn from other patients about how to make healthy choices. Ask your social worker if your clinic or local community has support group meetings. If they do not, ask how you can help start one. You may also find online support groups by searching the internet (i.e. National Kidney Foundation).

Some other ways to be involved in your care are knowing your medicines, asking your dietitian about your diet and lab values, talking to your social worker if you want to work, go to school, or volunteer, and helping prevent infection and protecting your access by washing your hands before and after treatment. Also, attending your plan-of-care meetings and asking about Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) meetings.

When you become involved in your care and understand your choices, you have more control over your health. That is an empowering feeling!

Infection Control

Why Are Infections and Germs Bad?

Infections are the second leading cause of death among dialysis patients. Dialysis patients are at a higher risk for infection because they have weaker immune systems, which is what fights off infections. Dialysis patients are at a higher risk for infection because they require a catheter, or needles placed in their access to start their dialysis treatment.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Infection?

- Fever and chills
- Soreness at the access site
- Redness or swelling at the access site
- Drainage at the access site

What Can I Do to Lower My Risk of Infection?

Wash your hands and access before getting in the dialysis chair. Let your dialysis staff know if you need help washing your access. Wash your hands when you leave the dialysis clinic.

Hand Hygiene Multiple Choice

1. What is the best way to prevent the spread of germs?
 - A. Wash your hands before leaving home
 - B. Wash your hands and access before sitting in the dialysis chair
 - C. Use hand alcohol prep
2. How long should you wash your hands?
 - A. 20 seconds – sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice
 - B. Until your hands are wet
 - C. Does not matter
3. What is the best way to wash your hands?
 - A. Use warm water
 - B. Use soap and water
 - C. Put soap on your hands and rub your palms together – be sure to wash the back of your hands and between your fingers

Answer Key: 1. B 2. A 3. C

Treatment Options: Patient Story



Greetings! My name is Precious McCowan, and my eight-year journey on in-center hemodialysis has not always been a positive venture. I was diagnosed at the age of 25 with kidney challenges due to diabetes and hypertension. By the

age of 27, I was five years into my career and placed on hemodialysis. I thought my life was over. When I first started treatment, I thought I was in a twilight zone. I was still in denial at the fact that I would have to do dialysis three times a week for four hours, yet I was so young with many dreams and aspirations that were being placed on hold. I must admit, the first few years were hard with compliance, but one day I decided I would not let kidney disease defeat me! So, I took control of my health, while also

getting involved as a Facility Patient Representative (FPR) at my dialysis unit, where I connect with patients through dialysis education. With this I have also established new friendships.

As an FPR, I needed to do more to advocate for those challenged with kidney failure so; I joined Network 14 ESRD Patient Advisory Committee (PAC). And, I felt a devotion to collaborate with ESRD patients around the country to make a difference and bring awareness, so I linked with the National Patient and Family Engagement and Learning Action Network (NPFE-LAN). Being a part of these organizations has given me HOPE to keep THRIVING for myself and to be a guide for those struggling to cope on dialysis. Being an in-center hemodialysis patient, I have the opportunity to share and learn from others with similar medical conditions; these engagements have saved my life!

Getting Back to Work!

When you first start dialysis, you may feel too sick to work or go to school. However, after you adjust to being on dialysis or having a transplant and feel better, you may find that you are ready to work or go to school.

If you need to learn new skills to change jobs, there are organizations that can help. One of those is Rehabilitation Services. Rehabilitation Services helps patients in meeting their goals of retraining for a new job or returning to work. You may benefit from training or financial assistance for college and technical school. The goal for Rehabilitation Services is to help people continue their education, keep their jobs, or get new jobs. Ask your social worker to help you get in touch with Rehabilitation Services or other job counselors in your area.

ALABAMA 800-441-7607

Department of Rehabilitation Services
602 S. Lawrence Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
<http://www.rehab.state.al.us/Home/default.aspx?url=/Home/Main>

MISSISSIPPI 800-443-1000

Department of Rehabilitation Services
1281 Highway 51
Madison, MS 39110
<http://www.mdrs.state.ms.us/>

TENNESSEE 615-313-4891

Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Citizens Plaza State Office Building
400 Deaderick Street, 12th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-1403
<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation.html>

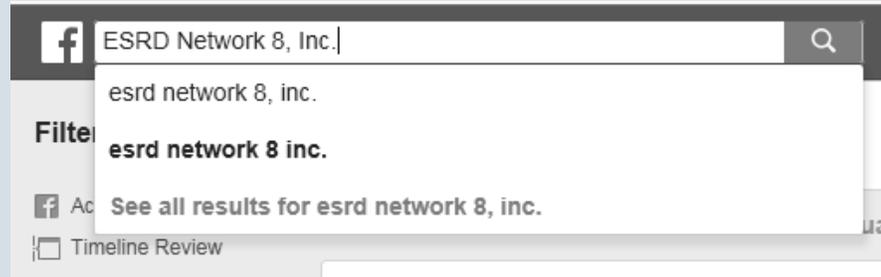
Do You Want to Learn More About Your Health?



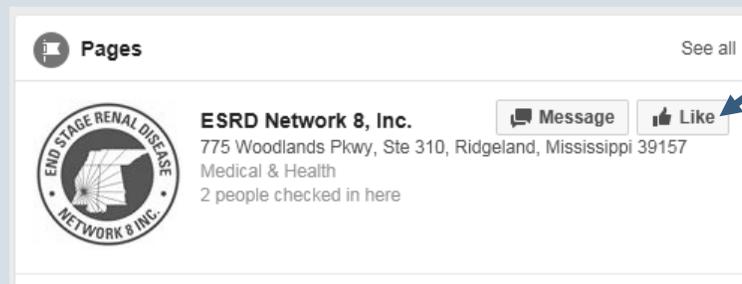
To receive this information, log into your Facebook account and like the Network 8, Inc. Facebook page by following these steps:

Network 8, Inc. has a Facebook page for you! Check out our weekly updates on topics important to you and your health. On this page you will find information about:

- Kidney Friendly Recipes
- Health Tips
- Patient Stories



2. Click on the “like” button.



1. Search for ESRD Network 8, Inc.

Now, you will start receiving Network 8 updates!

NKF Peers

You're Not Alone! Talk to someone who's been there.

Speak with a trained peer mentor who can share their experiences about dialysis, transplant, or living kidney donation with you.

Call 855-653-7337 (855-NKF-PEER). After you call, you will speak with an NKF staff member who will ask you questions in order to match you with a mentor who will be a good fit for you!

To file a grievance please contact Network 8 at 877-936-9260, info@nw8.esrd.net, 775 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite 310, Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157, and www.esrdnetwork8.org.

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