



Quick Tip Sheet for Supporting Students on Dialysis

General Overview:

Some kidney diseases require minimal treatment and have less impact on health and lifestyle. More severe kidney diseases result in the loss of kidney function and require dialysis or kidney transplantation for the person to stay alive. Dialysis is a treatment that removes fluid and waste products from the blood.

Peritoneal Dialysis requires the surgical placement of a catheter or tube in the abdomen. A special cleansing solution is put into the abdominal cavity through the catheter. The solution pulls extra fluid and waste products from the blood. The family is taught to do this procedure for the child at home. Peritoneal dialysis is performed every night. The child is generally hooked up to their dialysis machine while they are sleeping for an 8-10 hour treatment. This allows the child to attend school on a daily basis.

Hemodialysis requires the child to come to the Division of Nephrology at Cincinnati Children's Hospital for a dialysis treatment 2- 4 times per week; this procedure generally lasts about 4 hours. Students undergoing dialysis may experience a range of effects; however, the goal is for students to attend school as regularly as possible and to receive special accommodations, if necessary, as they work to attain their educational goals.

Transplantation when a child receives a kidney transplant, 6-8 weeks of school will generally be missed. School arrangements will be made to address this period of absence and to assure that the child does not fall behind in school.

Physical and Psychological Side Effects:

- Fatigue
 - Falling asleep in class or taking extra naps—this may be due to long-standing anemia, low blood count, effects of post hemodialysis treatments
- Headaches
 - Due to high blood pressure, hypertension, effects of post hemodialysis treatment
- Dietary Restrictions
 - May include—foods low in potassium and sodium, fluid restrictions, and limited dairy
- Anxiety/Depression/Adjustment Disorder
 - Due to school absences, needing to meet the criteria to be listed for a transplant, anticipating/undergoing a transplant, or transitioning to chronic care/disease

Accommodations for Physical/Medical Needs:

- Ensure that the student has an up-to-date individualized health plan.
- Ensure that all personnel who work with the student understand the plan, are aware of medications to be administered during the school day, and can address any emergencies with the student's port/catheter.
- Make sure an emergency kit stays with the student during the school day in the event of catheter emergency care.
- Allow extra time in between classes to avoid crowded halls to keep the student and hemodialysis catheter safe and free from possible trauma.
- Modify PE class and/or identify creative alternatives for PE credits (if requested by medical staff).
- Allow student to put head down on desk for rest when fatigued.

Learning Effects:

- Students typically miss three full or partial days of school per week, which is why the below accommodations are recommended.

Accommodations to Meet Learning Needs:

- Shorten and prioritize assignments when appropriate.
- Emphasize **QUALITY** over **QUANTITY** with respect to assignments
 - Focus on core content and acquisition of grade-level skills/concepts
- Offer flexible scheduling (e.g., partial day attendance supported by homebound instruction)