

What is kidney failure and how is it treated?

Kidney failure means your kidneys no longer work well enough to do their job. You need treatment to replace the work your damaged kidneys have stopped doing. The treatments for kidney failure are

- **hemodialysis***
- **peritoneal dialysis**
- a kidney transplant

Your kidneys filter wastes and extra fluid from your blood to keep you healthy. The wastes and extra fluid become urine that is stored in your bladder until you urinate. When your kidneys fail, dialysis can take over a small part of the work your damaged kidneys can no longer do. You can make treatments work better by

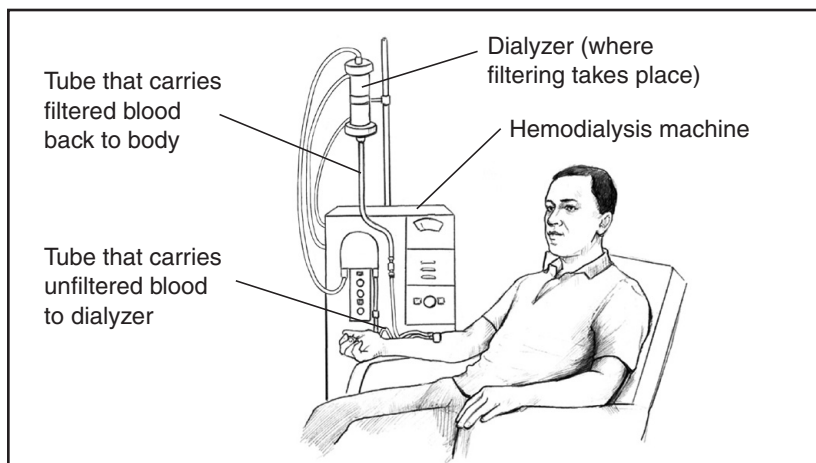
- sticking to your treatment schedule
- taking all medicines your doctor prescribes
- following a special diet that keeps wastes from building up in your blood
- being active most days of the week

*See the Pronunciation Guide for tips on how to say the words in **bold** type.

Hemodialysis

Hemodialysis is a treatment for kidney failure. Hemodialysis uses a machine to filter your blood outside your body. First, a dialysis nurse places two needles into your arm. A pump on the hemodialysis machine draws your blood through one of the needles into a tube. The tube takes the blood to a filter, called a **dialyzer**. Inside the dialyzer, your blood flows through thin fibers that are like straws. The wastes and extra fluid leave the blood through tiny holes in the fibers. Then, a different tube carries the filtered blood back to your body through the second needle.

Read more in *Treatment Methods for Kidney Failure: Hemodialysis and Home Hemodialysis* at www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.

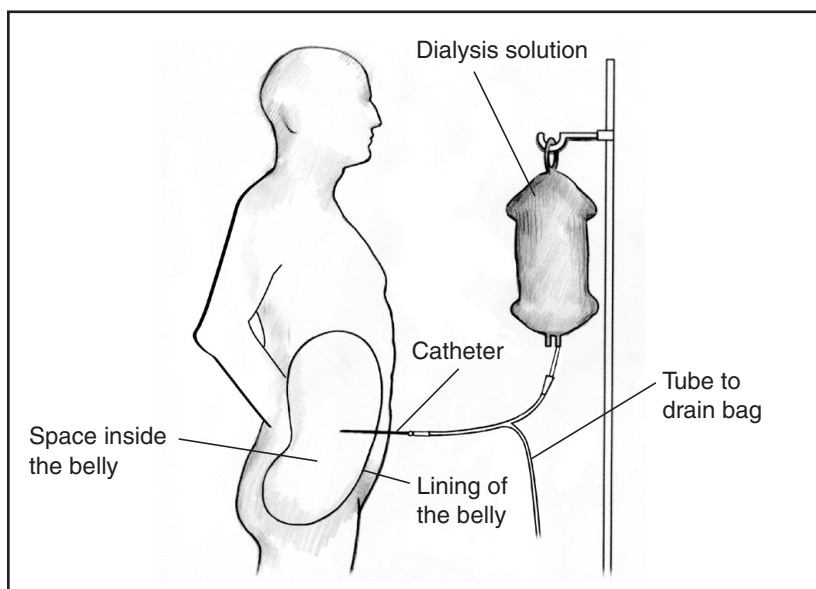


Hemodialysis

Peritoneal Dialysis

The other form of dialysis, called peritoneal dialysis, uses the lining of your abdomen, or belly, to filter your blood inside your body. A doctor places a soft tube called a **catheter** in your belly a few weeks before you start peritoneal dialysis. You empty dialysis solution from a plastic bag through the catheter into the empty space inside your belly. The dialysis solution soaks up wastes and extra fluid from your body. After a few hours, you drain the used dialysis solution into another bag. Then you start over with a fresh bag of dialysis solution.

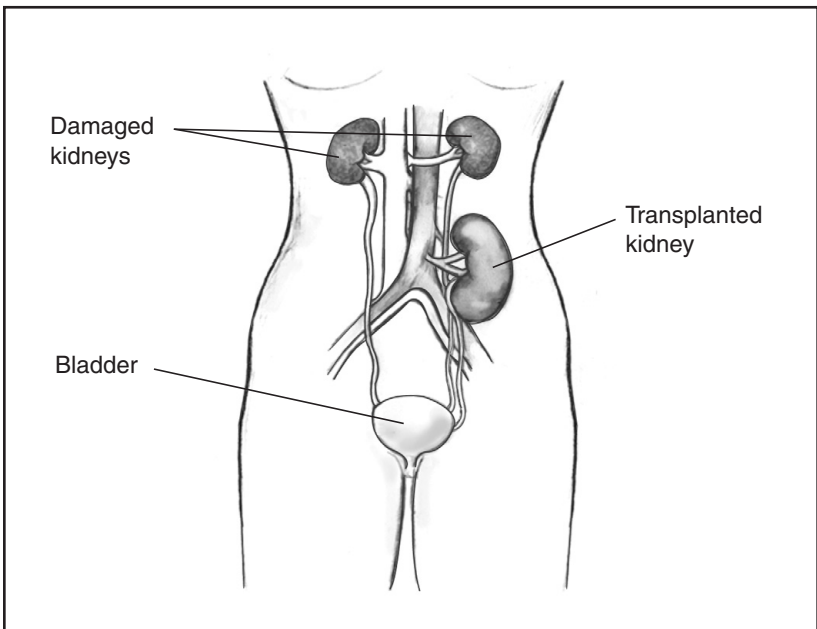
Read more in *Treatment Methods for Kidney Failure: Peritoneal Dialysis* at www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.



Peritoneal dialysis

Kidney Transplant

A kidney transplant places a healthy kidney from another person into your body. The kidney may come from someone who has just died. Your doctor will place your name on a waiting list for a kidney. A family member or friend might be able to give you a kidney. Then you don't have to wait.



Kidney transplant

The new kidney takes over filtering your blood. The damaged kidneys usually stay where they are. The new kidney is placed in the front lower abdomen, on one side of the bladder. Your body normally attacks anything that shouldn't be there, such as bacteria. Your body will think the new kidney shouldn't be there. You will take medicines called **immunosuppressants** to keep your body from attacking the new kidney.

Read more in *Treatment Methods for Kidney Failure: Transplantation* at www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.