

## CHAPTER 6: MENTAL HEALTH

### Psychological Challenges of Dialysis

Dialysis can be emotionally challenging. It's common to experience feelings of:

- ✔ Stress
- ✔ Depression
- ✔ Isolation
- ✔ Anxiety
- ✔ Frustration

### Tips for Coping

- **Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional:** Don't hesitate to seek professional help if you're struggling emotionally.
- **Join a support group:** Connecting with other dialysis patients can provide valuable emotional support.
- **Practice relaxation techniques:** Such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle:** Eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, and getting enough sleep can help improve your mood.
- **Stay connected with loved ones:** Social support is essential for emotional well-being.

## CHAPTER 6: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

### Contact Information

- ✔ Keep a list of important contact information readily available, including:
- ✔ Nephrologist (kidney doctor)
- ✔ Dialysis center
- ✔ Social worker
- ✔ Dietitian
- ✔ Other healthcare providers

### Importance of Regular Communication

- **Report any changes in your health:** Such as new symptoms, changes in appetite, or weight gain or loss.
- **Ask questions:** Don't hesitate to ask your healthcare team any questions you have about your treatment or your health.
- **Be an active participant in your care:** Work with your healthcare team to develop a treatment plan that meets your individual needs.

### Conclusion

Living with dialysis can be challenging, but it's possible to live a full and productive life. By following your treatment plan, taking care of yourself, and staying positive, you can maintain your health and well-being.

## VITAL STRIVE

Vital Strive is a leading medical tourism company dedicated to providing exceptional and affordable healthcare experiences in Thailand. We connect international patients with world-class hospitals and specialists, offering comprehensive support every step of the way. Our mission is to make your medical journey seamless and stress-free, allowing you to focus on your health and recovery.

### We offer a range of services, including

- **Treatment coordination:** We'll help you find the right hospital and specialist for your specific needs and coordinate all necessary appointments and medical examinations.
- **Medical translation:** Our experienced translators will facilitate clear communication between you and your medical team.
- **Travel arrangements:** We'll assist with booking flights, accommodation, and transportation, ensuring your comfort and convenience.
- **Logistical support:** From airport pickup to visa assistance, we'll handle all the logistical details of your trip.
- **Personalized care:** We understand that every patient is unique, and we tailor our services to meet your individual needs and preferences.
- **Free initial consultations:** Discuss your treatment options with specialists before arriving in Thailand.

## WHY CHOOSE VITAL STRIVE?

- **World-class healthcare**  
Access Thailand's leading hospitals and specialists.
- **Affordable prices**  
Receive high-quality treatment at a fraction of the cost compared to many other countries.
- **End-to-end support**  
We'll manage every detail of your medical journey, from start to finish.
- **Personalized attention**  
Experience a truly patient-centered approach to care.



## Contact Us

Vital Strive Medical Hub



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*We look forward to assisting you on  
your journey to better health.*



# YOUR GUIDE TO THRIVING ON DIALYSIS

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH JOURNEY





## CHAPTER 1: NUTRITION

### The Importance of Proper Nutrition for Dialysis Patients

Good nutrition plays a vital role in your overall health, especially when you're on dialysis. Because dialysis removes waste and extra fluid from your blood, it can also remove important nutrients. A balanced diet helps you:

- ✔ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✔ Keep your energy levels up
- ✔ Strengthening your immune system
- ✔ Reduce the risk of complications
- ✔ Improve your quality of life
- ✔ Allowed and Restricted Foods

Following a kidney-friendly diet is crucial for managing your health. This involves controlling your intake of certain nutrients like potassium, phosphorus, sodium, and fluids. Your doctor or dietitian will create a personalized plan, but here's a general guide:

Table 1: Foods to Enjoy (in moderation)	
Food Group	Examples
Proteins	Lean meats (chicken, fish, turkey), eggs, beans, lentils
Grains	White bread, white rice, pasta (limit whole grains)
Vegetables	Cauliflower, cabbage, carrots, peppers (limit potassium-rich vegetables like potatoes and tomatoes)
Fruits	Apples, berries, grapes, peaches (limit potassium-rich fruits like bananas and oranges)
Dairy	Low-protein milk, rice milk

Table 2: Foods to Limit or Avoid		
Food Group	Examples	Why Limit?
High-Potassium Foods	Bananas, oranges, potatoes, tomatoes, dried fruits	Potassium builds up in the blood and can cause heart problems.
High-Phosphorus Foods	Dairy products, nuts, seeds, chocolate, cola	Phosphorus builds up in the blood and can weaken bones.
High-Sodium Foods	Processed foods, canned goods, fast food, table salt	Sodium can cause fluid retention and high blood pressure.
Fluids	Limit fluids as instructed by your doctor	Excess fluid can overload your system between dialysis treatments.

### Practical Tips for Improving Nutrition

- **Read food labels carefully**  
Pay attention to serving sizes and the amounts of potassium, phosphorus, and sodium.
- **Choose fresh foods**  
Fresh fruits and vegetables are generally lower in sodium and phosphorus than processed foods.
- **Use herbs and spices**  
Enhance the flavor of your food without adding salt.
- **Cook at home more often**  
This gives you more control over the ingredients and portion sizes.
- **Drink plenty of water (as directed by your doctor)**  
Staying hydrate is important, but follow your fluid restrictions.
- **Weigh yourself regularly**  
Monitor your weight to ensure you're not retaining too much fluid.
- **Communicate with your dietitian**  
Regularly discuss your diet and any concerns you have.

Daily Fluid Intake Tracker		
Day	Fluid Intake (ml)	Notes
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		



## CHAPTER 2: MEDICATIONS

### Common Medications for Dialysis Patients

Dialysis patients often take several medications to manage their condition and prevent complications. These may include:

- ✔ Erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs): To treat anemia.
- ✔ Iron supplements: To help the body produce red blood cells.
- ✔ Phosphate binders: To control phosphorus levels in the blood.
- ✔ Vitamin D supplements: To maintain bone health.
- ✔ Blood pressure medications: To control high blood pressure.
- ✔ Medications to control potassium levels: Such as binders or diuretics.

(Important Note: This is not an exhaustive list, and the specific medications prescribed will vary depending on the individual's needs. Never start or stop taking any medication without consulting your doctor.)

### How to Take Medications Correctly

- ✔ Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Take the prescribed dose at the right time.
- ✔ Don't crush or chew tablets: Unless instructed to do so.
- ✔ Store medications properly: Keep them in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.
- ✔ Inform your doctor about all medications: Including over-the-counter drugs and supplements.
- ✔ Don't miss doses: If you miss a dose, contact your doctor or pharmacist for guidance.
- ✔ Potential Side Effects and How to Manage Them

Medications can have side effects. It's important to discuss any side effects with your doctor or pharmacist. They may be able to adjust your medication or suggest ways to manage the side effects.

Medication Schedule				
Medication	Dose	Time	Day	Notes

## CHAPTER 3: ACCESS CARE

### Types of Access

There are two main types of vascular access for hemodialysis:

- **Arteriovenous (AV) fistula:** A surgically created connection between an artery and a vein in your arm. This is the preferred type of access.
- **AV graft:** A synthetic tube used to connect an artery and a vein if a fistula isn't possible.
- **Catheter:** A tube inserted into a vein in your neck, chest, or groin. Usually a temporary access.

Peritoneal dialysis uses a catheter placed in the abdomen.

### AV Fistula/Graft Care

- ✔ Check for a thrill (vibration) and bruit (whooshing sound) daily: This indicates good blood flow.
- ✔ Keep the access site clean and dry.
- ✔ Avoid sleeping on the arm with the access.
- ✔ Don't wear tight clothing or jewelry over the access.
- ✔ Don't let anyone take blood pressure or draw blood from the arm with the access.

### Peritoneal Dialysis Catheter Care

- ✔ Keep the exit site clean and dry.
- ✔ Follow your doctor's instructions for dressing changes.
- ✔ Watch for signs of infection.



## CHAPTER 4: MANAGING COMPLICATIONS

### Common Complications of Dialysis

Dialysis can sometimes cause complications. Knowing what to look for and how to manage these issues is important. Common complications include:

- **Low blood pressure (hypotension):** Can cause dizziness, lightheadedness, and nausea.
- **Muscle cramps:** Painful muscle contractions.
- **Itching (pruritus):** Dry, itchy skin.
- **Nausea and vomiting:** Feeling sick to your stomach.
- **Sleep problems:** Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- **Amyloidosis:** A rare but serious condition where abnormal proteins build up in the body.
- **Low blood pressure:** Notify the dialysis staff immediately. They may adjust the dialysis treatment or give you fluids.
- **Muscle cramps:** Stretching the affected muscle can often help. Your doctor may also prescribe medication.
- **Itching:** Use moisturizing lotions and avoid hot showers. Your doctor may prescribe medication to relieve itching.
- **Nausea and vomiting:** Eat small, frequent meals and avoid greasy or spicy foods. Your doctor may prescribe anti-nausea medication.
- **Sleep problems:** Establish a regular sleep schedule and avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. Talk to your doctor if sleep problems persist.
- **Amyloidosis:** Treatment may involve medications and managing underlying conditions.

### When to Seek Emergency Medical Help

- ✔ Severe chest pain or shortness of breath.
- ✔ Sudden confusion or loss of consciousness.
- ✔ Severe bleeding.
- ✔ Seizures.



## CHAPTER 5: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### Importance of Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is important for everyone, including dialysis patients. It can help:

- ✔ Improve your energy levels
- ✔ Control your weight
- ✔ Strengthen your muscles and bones
- ✔ Reduce stress and improve your mood
- ✔ Improve your overall health and well-being

### Appropriate Exercises

Talk to your doctor about the types and amount of exercise that are right for you. Some good options include:

- ✔ Walking
- ✔ Bicycling
- ✔ Swimming
- ✔ Chair exercises
- ✔ Yoga (modified for dialysis patients)

### Suggested Weekly Exercise Schedule

(This should be personalized based on the individual's physical condition and dialysis schedule. Consult with a doctor or physical therapist.)

- ✔ Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days of the week.
- ✔ Break up your exercise into shorter sessions if needed.
- ✔ Listen to your body and rest when you need to.

