There are many myths surrounding home dialysis. This fact sheet helps to shed some light on concerns patients may have, and health professional may need to advise them about regarding home dialysis. Home dialysis incorporates both home haemodialysis and home peritoneal dialysis.

**MYTH: There is no support for me at home if things go wrong?**

During training home dialysis nurses teach a person everything they need to know about doing dialysis. The emphasis is on the correct way for a person to do their dialysis, on staying safe and well.

People are taught how to problem solve and what to do in certain circumstances. Contact details of nurses and technicians are provided for use when help and advice is needed. Help is as close as the telephone.

**MYTH BUSTED**

**MYTH: I am too old to learn new tricks**

Currently in Australia the people on home dialysis range from babies to people over 85 years old. The majority of people are between 45 to 84 years of age. Home dialysis training is individualised for each person. Training times vary widely among individuals and a person is never sent home unless the training nurse feels they are safe with the technique.

Training is not a race, and most people can learn something new. Peritoneal Dialysis is quicker to learn than home haemodialysis.

**MYTH BUSTED**

**MYTH: I cannot do home haemodialysis because I could not put a needle in my arm**

Cannulation can be the most feared component of home haemodialysis training. However, once a person learns to cannulate themselves they will tell you they never let a nurse put the needles in ever again. During training, cannulation is taught, and is not difficult to learn. It is only taught when the training nurse feels a person is ready to be guided to undertake this skill. If a person genuinely has a needle phobia, this can be worked through with the nursing staff or psychology service (if available at the hospital).

Home Peritoneal dialysis does not require any needles.
**MYTH: I live in a rented house therefore; I can’t do dialysis at home**

Living in a rented house doesn’t exclude a person from peritoneal dialysis, and should not be a problem for home haemodialysis either. The home dialysis staff will contact the landlord through the real estate (if applicable) to ask permission to install the plumbing for haemodialysis. The majority of landlords approve the plumbing to be installed although some request that the plumbing be reversed if the person moves out.

**MYTH BUSTED**

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**MYTH: It will cost me a lot of money to do home dialysis**

Home dialysis does cost a lot but fortunately the renal unit pays the majority of the costs, for both haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

All the machinery, plumbing and installation, the fluids, peritoneal dialysis bags, dialysis tubing and dialysers, chemicals, and cleaners will all be delivered and packed away in the home. Home visits by nurses and any other tests are paid for by the health system (the frequency varies depending on the hospital).

The good news is that the reduced travel, compared to attending a dialysis unit three times a week, usually counterbalances any small costs.

The only things that those at home on dialysis may have to pay for are:

- Additional electricity (a variable rebate is available in each state, and covers most costs).
- Weighing scales (provided in some states).
- Water charges for haemodialysis (in some states only)
- A table or trolley may have to be found/adapted
- A reclining chair for daytime haemodialysis (provided in some states)
- Antibacterial soap and paper towel

Visit www.homedialysis.org.au/support/finance for up-to-date information

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**MYTH: I will be forgotten at home**

People on home dialysis are never forgotten. All dialysis staff will have a routine for contacting a person on home dialysis; ask your home dialysis centre what this will be. Home dialysis patients send in their dialysis records and have regular blood tests. Patients are also seen regularly by their renal doctor and/or GP.

**MYTH BUSTED**
MYTH: I have a septic tank and cannot get rid of all the water from home haemodialysis.

Peritoneal dialysis is an option that does not generate large volumes of water. PD only generates a small volume of fluid to be disposed of each day.

Home haemodialysis can usually be managed with a septic tank; the issues surrounding it are as follows.

- The existing septic has to meet current council standards, have absorption trenches that can cope with increased water disposal, or have a larger piece of land to where the excess water can be pumped to.
- There are RO’s (water treatment) available that do not use the chemicals that are detrimental to the health of septic tanks.

As everybody's home situation is unique a thorough assessment is needed before a decision is made.

MYTH BUSTED
MYTH: I have limited or no English therefore, I can’t do home dialysis.

Australia is a multicultural society and there are people from all different cultures on dialysis within Australia. During training, family members may be able to assist with the training or learn with the person on dialysis. Most hospitals have access to an interpreter service that can assist with training a person for home dialysis. It is recommended that a non-English person has someone to assist who can contact the home dialysis unit if they require phone support.

MYTH BUSTED

It is hope that this information is useful, and will help to dispel myths about home dialysis in your local community. The best source of information locally is your own home dialysis training unit. For those who want to go home there should be a way to achieve this.

It is also important to remember that home dialysis offers many advantages.

- Control of health and treatment regimes
- Improved quality of life
- Increased access to travel and holidays (particularly peritoneal dialysis)
- Improved health outcomes (particularly for enhanced hours of haemodialysis)
- Reduced diet and fluid restrictions
- Reduced medication load
- Improved flexibility for work and social activities

For those who want more information about home haemodialysis and home peritoneal dialysis please visit: www.homedialysis.org.au

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REFERENCES


