

## MYTHS ABOUT KIDNEY FAILURE AND DIALYSIS

Some of you are long-time supporters of KDF, while others have just joined us. You've probably read several articles on kidney disease and dialysis, but just how well do you know the subject? In this issue of K-Bytes, we will debunk common myths and present lesser known facts about dialysis.

### Myth #1 > Dialysis can only be done at a dialysis centre



The more discerning of you will know that this is most certainly not true as there is the option of **peritoneal dialysis**, which can be done at the patient's own home or work place. Even haemodialysis can be performed at home if you have the know-how and equipment but this is uncommon in Singapore.

### Myth #2 > The dialysis process is painful



Patients on haemodialysis may experience pain during needling – the process where needles are inserted, but other than that, the dialysis process is largely painless for most patients. In some instances, patients may experience complications such as muscle cramps which could be painful. Peritoneal dialysis is considered painless as no needles are used.

### Myth #3 > Patients on dialysis have to spend a whole day hooked onto a dialysis machine



Although total dialysis time varies from patient to patient and differs slightly depending on the country, haemodialysis patients at KDF spend approximately 4 hours dialysing at the centres each time. Most patients in Singapore dialyse 3 times a week.

Peritoneal dialysis on the other hand, is a form of dialysis which occurs inside the body's abdominal cavity. There are two forms of peritoneal dialysis: Automated Peritoneal Dialysis where a machine performs the required exchanges compared with Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis which requires the exchanges of dialysis solution to be performed manually 4- 5 times a day (depending on each patient's requirement), taking about 30-40 minutes per dialysis exchange. Hence, it is untrue to say that patients spend the whole day doing dialysis.

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### Myth #4 > Regular dialysis alone is adequate to manage end stage kidney failure



Dialysis alone does not replace all functions of the kidneys. Therefore, patients with end stage kidney failure need medications, dietary changes and fluid limitations in order to have a good outcome and quality of life.

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### Myth #5 > Dialysis will cure end stage kidney failure



Unfortunately, this is also untrue. Dialysis is a type of renal replacement therapy which removes waste material and excessive fluid directly from the blood and also balance some of the mineral content in the body. It can replace some of the functions of the kidneys, but it cannot undo chronic kidney failure. A lifetime of dialysis is required for patients with end stage kidney failure, unless they receive a kidney transplant.

Now that we've debunked some common dialysis myths, we hope that you have a better understanding on this life-sustaining treatment option for patients with kidney failure. As briefly mentioned above, to make the best out of their dialysis treatments, patients also need to make an effort to implement changes to their lifestyle. As such, it is also our hope that this issue sheds some light on the impact of dialysis on a patient's life.

#### Sources:

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