



Heartland Kidney  
Network

We're Here For You.

# MY NETWORK: YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) pays for the majority (80%) of treatment that most people on dialysis receive. As a person with kidney failure, you have certain rights and responsibilities. When you go to a treatment clinic, you should ask for a copy of your rights and responsibilities. This will help you know what to expect from your care team and what they expect from you. If you haven't reviewed your rights and responsibilities in awhile, ask the staff for another copy.

## YOUR RIGHTS

Each dialysis clinic has rights for persons receiving dialysis care. Some of the common rights may include:

- You have a right to be told about your rights and responsibilities.
- You have the right to be treated with respect.
- You have the right to privacy. Your medical records cannot be shared with anyone, unless you say so.
- You have the right to meet with your whole health care team to plan your treatment.
- You have the right to see a dietitian for help with food planning and a social worker for counseling.
- You have the right to be told about your health in a way that you understand.
- You have the right to be told about and to choose your treatment options.
- You have the right to be told about any tests ordered for you and the test results.
- You have the right to be told about the services offered at the clinic.
- You have the right to be told about your diagnosis, the process of dialysis, and dialyzer reuse.
- You have the right to be told about any expenses that you have to pay for if they are not covered by insurance or Medicare.
- You have the right to be told about any financial help available to you.
- You have the right to accept or refuse any treatment or medicine your doctor orders for you.
- You have the right to be told about the rules at the clinic (for example, rules for visitors, eating, personal conduct, etc.)
- You have the right to choose if you want to be part of any research studies.
- You have the right to know about the policies and procedures regarding discharge and/or transfers, including involuntary discharges.

For more information or to file a grievance please contact the Heartland Kidney Network at: Heartland Kidney Network • 7306 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy. • Suite 230 • Kansas City, MO 64153  
Toll-Free Patient Line: (800) 444-9965 • [net12@nw12.esrd.net](mailto:net12@nw12.esrd.net) • [www.heartlandkidney.org](http://www.heartlandkidney.org)

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) #12 Network Coordinating Council, Inc. dba Heartland Kidney Network. This resource was (created, developed, compiled, etc.) while under contract with Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Baltimore, Maryland.  
Contract #HHSM-500-2010-NW012C. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.

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## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Each clinic has responsibilities for all persons receiving dialysis in their clinic. Some of the usual responsibilities may include:

- You need to treat other patients and staff as you would like to be treated, with respect.
- You need to pay your bills on time. If this is hard for you, you can ask about a payment plan.
- You need to tell your care team if you refuse any treatment or medicine that your doctor has ordered for you.
- You need to tell your care team if you do not understand your medical condition or treatment plan.
- You need to be on time for your treatments or when you see your doctor.
- You need to tell the staff at the clinic if you know that you are going to be late, or miss a treatment or visit with your doctor.
- You need to tell your care team if you have medical problems, are going to the dentist, are being treated by another doctor, or have recently been to the hospital.
- You need to follow the rules of the clinic.
- You need to get to and from the clinic for your treatments. You can talk with your social worker if you need help doing this. Medicare does not pay for transportation and does not require the clinic to provide it.

<http://www.cms.gov/GuidanceforLawsAndRegulations/Downloads/esrdpgmguidance.pdf>

## COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS

Sometimes the frustration of dealing with a chronic illness is overwhelming. There are some common misperceptions regarding your rights and responsibilities as a patient.

### **The staff cannot change my dialysis time or chair.**

No, the staff CAN change the time you receive dialysis, both going on and/or off the machine and/or where you sit for treatment. Scheduling is challenging, but the staff must consider the needs of ALL the patients in the unit and not just your needs. One reason your time and/or chair changes is if your or another patients time gets changed because of doctors' orders. However, if you are working or going to school, the clinic has a responsibility to work with you to allow you to continue to work or attend school.

### **I can chose who cares for me.**

No, the clinic makes staff assignment decisions based on staff competencies and the needs of ALL patients. You do have the right to know the clinics policies and to share any concerns you may have about your care.

### **The staff have to take care of me, because without dialysis, I could die.**

Yes and No. The staff is not required to take care of you if you behave inappropriately, put the safety of the other patients or staff at risk, become verbally and/or physically threatening or abusive, and/or do not pay your bill. In fact, in the case of immediate severe threats to the health and safety of others, the clinic may immediately discharge you. However, the staff need to follow the Medicare rules for an involuntary discharge.

## MY QUESTIONS

**Ask your Care Team:** Are there any other rules I need to follow in the unit? What is the clinic's policy and procedure for discharge and/or transfers? What if I feel like my rights are violated?

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