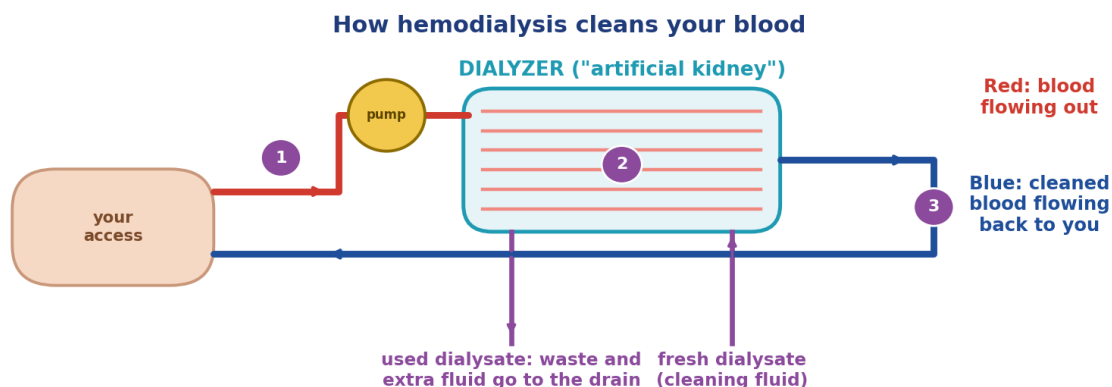


YOUR FIRST DIALYSIS SESSION

What to expect, step by step, and how to make it easier

Nervous about your first treatment? That is completely normal. Nurses and technicians will guide you the whole way, and **you can ask any question at any time**. Times below are typical; your unit will tell you yours.



- 1 Blood leaves your body through one needle or catheter port.
- 2 Wastes and extra fluid pass through tiny filters into the dialysate.
- 3 Cleaned blood returns to you. Machines watch pressure, air, and temperature.

Your session, step by step

#	What happens	About how long
1	Arrive and check in Sign in and show ID. Wash your access arm with soap and water. Staff weigh you and check temperature, blood pressure, and pulse.	5 to 15 minutes
2	Get settled You sit or recline in a chair or bed. The nurse looks at, feels, and listens to your access and asks how you feel.	5 to 10 minutes
3	Get connected The nurse cleans the skin and places two needles (fistula or graft), or connects the catheter ports. Ask about numbing. Then the lines are hooked to the machine.	10 to 20 minutes
4	Dialysis Blood flows through the dialyzer and back. Staff check your blood pressure and pulse often. You can read, watch, rest, or chat. Speak up if you feel unwell.	3 to 4 hours (the first may be shorter)
5	Finish Blood is returned and the needles come out. You or staff press firmly on the sites until the bleeding stops. A catheter is flushed, capped, and re-dressed.	10 to 20 minutes
6	Check out You are weighed again and staff check your blood pressure. You get instructions and your next appointment, then head home.	5 to 10 minutes

HOW YOU MAY FEEL, AND WHAT TO DO

Most people do well. Tell your nurse about anything that feels wrong

How you may feel

You may notice	Why it can happen	What helps
Dizzy, cramping, nausea, or sweaty	Blood pressure can dip when extra fluid is removed	Tell the nurse right away; they can slow fluid removal or adjust. Follow your fluid limit between sessions
Headache or tiredness	Your body is adjusting to cleaner blood	First sessions are often shorter or gentler. Rest afterward and mention it to the team
Cold	Blood cools a little outside the body	Bring a sweater or blanket, or ask staff for one
Needle pain	The needle stick is uncomfortable for many at first	Ask about numbing cream or spray; relax your arm; tell staff if it burns or swells
Itching	Waste buildup and dry skin	Tell your team; lotion and medicines can help. Avoid scratching near the access
Nervous or restless	A new routine is a big change	Ask staff to explain each step; bring music, a book, or a friend (ask about visitors)

Tell the nurse right away during dialysis if you have

- Chest pain, trouble breathing, a racing heart, or feeling faint
- Severe headache, confusion, or sudden trouble seeing or speaking
- Pain, burning, swelling, or wetness at the needles or catheter
- Bleeding or a needle that seems out of place

After you leave

- Expect to feel tired for a few hours. Plan a ride home and a quiet evening.
- Keep the bandage on as your unit instructs. If a needle site bleeds, **press firmly with clean gauze**; call 911 if it does not stop in about 10 minutes.
- Eat and drink as your dietitian advises, and keep to your fluid limit.
- Check the buzz of your fistula or graft (or the dressing on your catheter) later in the day.
- Call your unit with questions. Keep every scheduled session; missed treatments make you feel worse.

Notes from my first session

How I felt

What went well

What I want to ask

Next appointment

My nurse's name

Unit phone
