



Examples of Self-Care Activities at the Dialysis Center

Self-care or partial self-care means that you can do many of the tasks that you see the patient care staff doing. If you decide to do self-care it does not mean that the staff will not help you if you need it. Patients that do self-care tend to love doing it and encourage their friends to do the same. It is “*all about safety*” though! The unit has to be confident that you will act in a safe manner and within the policies of their facility.

Activities that patients may be able to do at the dialysis facility! *	What would I have to learn to do this?	Who could I talk to if I want to do some or all of these things?
Weigh yourself prior to the treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use the scales to get an accurate reading. 	Other patients who are currently doing self-care, Nephrologist, Head Nurse, Charge Nurse, or the Unit Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell them that you want to discuss the option of self-care. • Note what you would like to do specifically. • Ask to schedule training. • Consider a trial period to see if self-care works for both you and the facility.
Wash your access arm prior to treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method that the facility requires for arm washing. 	
Insert your own needles (cannulation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean the skin prior to needle insertion • Tear tape strips • Select sites to insert the needles • Tape the needles in place securely 	
Draw blood for labs using the fistula needles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill a lab tube with blood • Know the difference between different types of lab tubes (color of the tops) 	
Remove your own needles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the needle after the treatment is over • Apply pressure to stop the bleeding • Apply a band-aid or other dressing over the needle sites. 	
Set up the tubing on your machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the needle after the treatment is over • Apply pressure to stop the bleeding • Apply a band-aid or other dressing over the needle sites. 	
Prime your machine tubing with saline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach a saline bag to the tubing using sterile technique 	

prior to treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and according to the unit policy. • Perform tubing priming according to the unit policy. 	
Check the alarms on your machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform the machine checks according to the unit policy. 	
Weigh yourself after the treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use the scales to get an accurate reading. 	
Check your vital signs before, during, and after treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to check your blood pressure, pulse, respiration, etc. 	
Record machine readings during the treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to read the dials and record the data. 	
Remove the tubing from your machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use infection control methods according to the unit policies. 	
Clean your machine after the treatment is over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use infection control methods according to the unit policies. 	
Clean your chair and area after your treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use infection control methods according to the unit policies. 	

*Facility policies vary and the facility has the right to determine if self-care can be performed at that unit or not. The state does not require special certifications for self-care. The facility is responsible to train you on how to perform tasks and document this in your record.

General Comments about Self-Care

1. It is a great way to get involved in your own care!
2. You can build your self-confidence!
3. It may save you time at the dialysis unit.
4. This is a way to have more control of and responsibility for what happens to your body.
5. It can be very helpful to the staff members and give them more time to attend to patients that cannot perform any of their care.
6. This is a way to “give back” and show appreciation for the availability of dialysis.
7. You can be an encouragement to other patients by letting them see what can be done.
8. It helps you to keep mentally and physically active.
9. Not every patient can or should do this, and that is OK.
- 10. Even after training for self-care, if the facility thinks this is unsafe for you to do, they have the right not to allow you to do it.**
11. If your facility does not allow self-care, you can ask them if there are other facilities nearby that do allow it.
- 12. If you act in a way that is unsafe for yourself or other people (whether on purpose or accidentally), the unit has the right to restrict the parts of self-care they will allow you to perform or even prevent you from continuing to do self-care at all.**