Anisha’s Story

My name is Anisha Twymon. I chose PD because at the time I was battling kidney failure, I was also enrolled in college getting my Bachelors of Art degree. PD allowed me to continue college, work, and get my dialysis treatments. PD was the best option for me because it allowed me to still see my kids as much as I wanted and gave them a little hands-on with what their mother was going through. At a young age for all of us, it was a big change and really opened our eyes.

With PD I had my normal life. You don’t have to get dressed to do your treatments and can be in the comfort of your own home. I did my treatments just about anywhere as long as it was a clean environment to do so. PD allowed me to finish college and work. My classes were only 90 minutes each so I could do almost all of my classes and do my treatment in my professor’s office if I had to. It’s easy to carry the treatment with you.

Another great reason to choose PD is you don’t have a fistula or a graph in your arm. You also don’t get stuck three days a week or have to get out of your bed to go to the clinic.

Dee’s Story

My name is Dee Clark. When I first learned my transplant failed, I was distraught. When I was receiving in-center dialysis, it seemed like my life revolved around dialysis. I was always either on the dialysis machine or in bed recovering from my treatments. I always felt completely washed out, tired, and miserable after my treatments.

Thankfully, my doctor shared with me that home dialysis was an option. I would be in charge of my own treatments. I wouldn’t have to drive to a clinic 3 days a week, and I would feel much better than I did in-center. I do not regret my decision! I have a lot more energy and more time to live my life on my own terms. I’m not going to lie, kidney failure still isn’t fun, and I sometimes have my days when I’m feeling down. But, having the freedom to do my treatments at home, on my own time, makes it a lot more bearable.

Resources:
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Dialysis Health Imperative brochure
- Home Dialysis Central (www.homedialysis.org)
It is important for you to choose the right dialysis treatment for you, so you can feel your best and live the way that you want to.

**What is home dialysis?**

Home dialysis has been available to end stage renal disease (ESRD) patients since the 1960s. In some countries up to 27% of dialysis patients receive dialysis at home, but in the U.S. only about 11.5% of patients currently receive dialysis at home.

Research shows that more patients are appropriate for home dialysis and should receive more education about home options.

**What are the benefits to home dialysis?**

There are many benefits of home dialysis such as an improvement in physical health, mental health, and nutritional status. Patients who receive peritoneal dialysis (PD) often have fewer side effects, such as nausea and fluid weight gain, and also may use fewer medications and have fewer dietary limitations than patients who receive in-center hemodialysis.

Home dialysis benefits:
- More control over when you dialyze
- There is no weekly travel involved to the clinic
- You can continue to work or travel

According to a national survey of kidney doctors, 92% of these doctors said that they would choose home dialysis for themselves. One doctor, Stanford University nephrologist Dr. Manjula Tamura, explained: “It sounds so complicated and intimidating, but when you sit down with patients and show them what’s involved, they’re surprised at how simple it is.”

**Types of home dialysis**

- **Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)**
  - Peritoneal dialysis uses the inner lining of your belly (peritoneum) as a filter to clean your blood. During PD, a cleansing fluid (dialysate) is circulated through a tube that is placed in your belly. This fluid stays in your belly for a few hours while it collects waste and water. Then you drain out the used fluid and put in fresh fluid. This is called an exchange. These exchanges take place several times a day and can be done most anywhere.
  - You can also use a machine (cycler) to do exchanges at night while you sleep.
  - Peritoneal dialysis is easy to do, does not require needles, is gentle on your heart, and you can take it along when you travel. You also do not need a partner to help with your treatments.

- **Home Hemodialysis (HHD)**
  - Home hemodialysis is a treatment in which an artificial membrane, known as a dialyzer, filters your blood. You would be connected to a set of tubes, with one tube taking blood to the dialyzer to be cleaned and the other tube returning the clean blood to your body. HHD uses the same type of dialysis machine that is used in your dialysis facility or a portable machine. Unlike peritoneal dialysis, a partner is needed for home hemodialysis.
  - There are three different types of HHD: daily home hemodialysis, nocturnal home hemodialysis, and standard home hemodialysis.
  - **Daily Home Hemodialysis**—With daily home HD, you and a partner will train for 2-6 weeks and learn to do your treatments at home 6-7 times a week.
  - **Nocturnal Home Hemodialysis**—You and a partner train for a few weeks and learn to do your treatments at home, 3-6 nights per week. You start the treatment, go to sleep, and get off the machine in the morning when you wake up. Nocturnal home HD removes more water and wastes than any other type of dialysis.
  - **Standard Home Hemodialysis**—You and a partner train for a few weeks and learn to do your treatments at home three times a week. This is the same “standard” schedule that is used in most dialysis clinics. At home you can choose to do longer treatments or a treatment every other day.

**Am I a candidate for home dialysis?**

1. Are you and your partner motivated to attend training and learn how to use your home dialysis machine?
2. Do you have the space to set up an area in your home for dialysis?
3. Do you have generally good health outside of your dialysis needs?
4. Do you have a spouse/friend/other person who could help as your care partner? (Only for HHD)

If the answers to these questions are yes, then you could be a good candidate for home dialysis! The next step is to talk with your kidney doctor or your dialysis nurse about home dialysis for you.

Remember, you won’t go home until you and your training nurse are sure you are ready!