



MEDICATIONS ON HOME HEMODIALYSIS

Medications, together with dialysis, diet and fluid control, can help keep you healthy when you have kidney failure. Medications are prescribed according to your needs. Your pharmacist and nurses will teach you how to take your medications so that you receive the most benefit.

It is very important to take your medications as prescribed and to tell your team right away if you think you are having any unexpected side effects. If you have been prescribed a medication by someone outside of your Home Dialysis team, it is important to consult with the kidney healthcare team before taking this medication. Also consult your team before taking any over-the-counter medications (non-prescription), herbal remedies, alternative medicines or dietary supplements.

Some of the medications that many patients with kidney failure are prescribed include:

Phosphate Binders bind with the phosphorus from the food you eat and stop phosphorus from building up in your body. There are different kinds of phosphate binders such as calcium carbonate (Tums™ chewable tablets or Calcium Carbonate tablets), Sevelamer, (Renagel™) and Lanthanum (Fosrenol™). These medications must be taken with your meals. Patients who dialyze for longer periods through the day or night need fewer or no phosphate binders at all.

Vitamin D (Rocaltrol, One-Alpha) in its active form helps our body use calcium better and help avoid bone problems.

Erythropoiesis (Red Blood Cell) Stimulating Agents such as Eprex™ or Aranesp™ treat anemia by helping to make more red blood cells. Treating anemia can give you more energy.

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Iron is needed to make red blood cells. This can be taken by mouth or intravenously.

Vitamin supplement (Replavite™) is used to replace vitamins B12, C and folic acid that are removed during dialysis. It is important to take this vitamin after you dialyze.

Always check with your healthcare team before taking any vitamins other than what has been prescribed to you. Stool softeners and Laxatives such as docusate sodium (Colace™) and Senna (Senokot™), Lactulose, Dulcolax™, and Lax-A-Day can help prevent or treat constipation.

Cholesterol lowering medications lower your blood cholesterol level and may decrease your risk for heart attacks and strokes.

Antibiotics may be prescribed to fight infections. Sometimes, certain antibiotics can be given intravenously during your dialysis treatment. You will be taught how to do this by your nurse. Always remember to check your dosage of antibiotic with your Home Dialysis team.

Heparin prevents your blood from clotting while it is being pumped through your dialysis blood circuit. The nurse will teach you how to administer Heparin and recognize when you may need dose adjustments.

Sodium polystyrene sulfonate (Kayexalate™) is used to help lower your potassium level in your blood should there be a delay in your hemodialysis treatment. Your Home Dialysis team will decide if you should take this and provide instructions on when it should be taken. You should always take the medication with you if you are travelling any distance from home, particularly in the event of inclement weather.

Blood pressure medications lower blood pressure, or increase blood pressure, and help your heart work well. There are many different medications that may help your blood pressure. Your kidney healthcare team will find the right medication(s) for you.

Insulin is given by injection and is sometimes used by some people who have diabetes to lower their blood sugar levels.

About the Chronic Kidney Disease Vascular Access Fact Sheets:

This Fact Sheet was created by the Ontario Renal Network ("ORN"), a work unit within Cancer Care Ontario ("CCO"), in collaboration with the Provincial Vascular Access Working Group ("PVAWG") to provide patients with standardized educational material about Catheters. This Fact Sheet is to be used for informational purposes only. This Fact Sheet is not a substitute for medical advice. This Fact Sheet may not include all relevant information and is not an exhaustive resource. Always consult with your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns. The information in this Fact Sheet does not create a physician-patient relationship between CCO/ORN/PVAWG and you.

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