



# DIALYSIS PATIENT GUIDE



**BLUEWATER**  
HEALTH

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**Vision:** Exceptional Care - Exceptional People - Exceptional Relationships

**Values:** Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence (CARE)

# INFORMATION FOR YOUR FIRST DAY



## Help With Transportation

Making plans to travel to and from dialysis can be stressful for patients and their families. There are resources available in many communities to assist with dialysis transportation. Please talk to your dialysis primary nurse or charge nurse, who can help you.

## Where to Be Dropped Off

Patients who use wheelchairs and patients being dropped off can use the hospital's Main Entrance off of Maria Street. Temporary parking is available if you require assistance getting into the hospital. Wheelchairs are available here and staff or volunteers can arrange for you to be portered to the unit if needed.

## Where to Park

There are 14 designated dialysis parking spots located in the underground parking area. Use of these spots will be arranged prior to your first treatment or on the day of your first treatment. The entrance to the underground parking lot is off Maria Street. There is access to the elevator from the parking area. Free parking can be made available if needed.

## What to Wear

Be sure to wear comfortable, washable clothing that permits your access site to be easily reached. We will not be responsible for damaged clothing. People often feel cool or cold while on dialysis. Please bring a blanket or blankets with you.

## **Patient Lockers**

There are lockers available in the waiting rooms of the Dialysis Unit. These are for use only while you are dialyzing. We are not responsible for lost or missing articles.

## **Passing the Time During Treatment**

You may wish to bring a book or newspaper. Each station has a TV set. Please bring your own headset if you wish to listen to the TV. You have the option of exercising during dialysis. Please let your nurse or nurse practitioner know if you are interested in more information about this.

## **Visitors**

It is important to include your family and friends in your care. It is often easier for them to understand dialysis if they visit you while you are having a treatment. The team is willing to answer questions they may have about kidney disease and treatment options. We will not share any personal information about your health or treatments without your consent.

We welcome visitors into the unit. However, they are asked to leave when people are going on and coming off dialysis. There also may be times when visitors are asked to leave the unit. (I.e. If it is unusually busy or there is a very ill patient).

## **Your New Responsibilities**

You have new responsibilities and a lot of information to learn now that you are on dialysis. At first this may be overwhelming, but remember, you are not alone. Your dialysis team is here to help you.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled appointment, or if you will be late, please notify the Dialysis Unit as early as possible.

## **Snowstorms/Bad Weather**

Sometimes people are unable to make it to dialysis because of bad weather. If this happens to you:

1. Call the Dialysis Unit to let us know you cannot make it, and to schedule your next treatment;
2. You may be asked to take Kayexalate. This is a medication that should control your potassium until your next treatment. Kayexalate is not an alternative to dialysis. If you do not have Kayexalate at home, please let your nurse or nurse practitioner know and we will give you some; and
3. Limit your fluid intake to 600 mL per day.

## **Sick Days**

There are days when people feel unwell. Cancelling your dialysis treatment because you feel unwell is not advised. Please call the unit and discuss your concerns with a nurse.

## **At Home**

If you have a dialysis related problem while you are at home, call the Dialysis Unit.

Monday to Saturday, 7:00 am to 11:00 pm

519-464-4400, Ext. 5313 or 5113

If you have a medical concern outside of these hours,

1. Go to a walk-in clinic if it is a non-life threatening situation; or
2. Go to your local Emergency Department if it is an emergency.

# YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM



## Physicians

We have a team of nephrologists and a number of specialists in training (fellows) who will be involved in your care over time.

### Physicians

- Manage your medical care;
- See you regularly along with your nurse practitioner. Please use this opportunity to speak to them regarding any questions or concerns you may have; and
- Attend clinic twice a month.

## Nurse Practitioner

- Manages and coordinates your care;
- Assists in arranging access creation;
- Arranges for you and your family to have contact with other patients (Peer Support Program – Kidney Foundation); and
- Also attends clinic twice a month.

## Charge Nurse

- Assists with the coordinating of your care;
- Organizes patient scheduling;
- Coordinates the day-to-day activity of the Dialysis Unit;
- Deals with patient problems/concerns; and
- Is in contact with physicians and the resource nurse at Kidney Care Centre via Telehealth conference, phone and fax.

## **Dialysis Unit Nurses**

Dialysis Unit nurses are specially trained to provide you with professional and personal care. Nurses

- Provide you and your family with information about your kidney disease, dialysis treatments and staying healthy;
- Supply written materials and give unit tours; and
- Arrange for you and your family to have contact with other patients (Peer Support Group – Kidney Foundation).

You will be assigned a Primary Care Nurse. He or she prepares clinic information and medication records. You can always check with all Dialysis Unit staff about your care.

## **Dialysis Unit Clerk**

- Performs clerical duties related to unit.

## **Dialysis Unit Assistant**

- Works in collaboration with your nurse in setting up and maintaining your dialysis machine during your treatment.

## YOUR FAMILY PHYSICIAN



It is important for you to continue to see your family physician for problems that are not related to your kidney disease. If you are unsure whether to contact your family physician or the nephrologist, call the Dialysis Unit and speak to the dialysis staff nurses.

Your family physician is welcome to call your nephrologist or nurse practitioner to discuss health concerns.

If your family physician refers you to a specialist, or you have a test done, please ask that a copy be sent to the Dialysis Unit.

If your family physician would like extra blood work, we are able to do this.

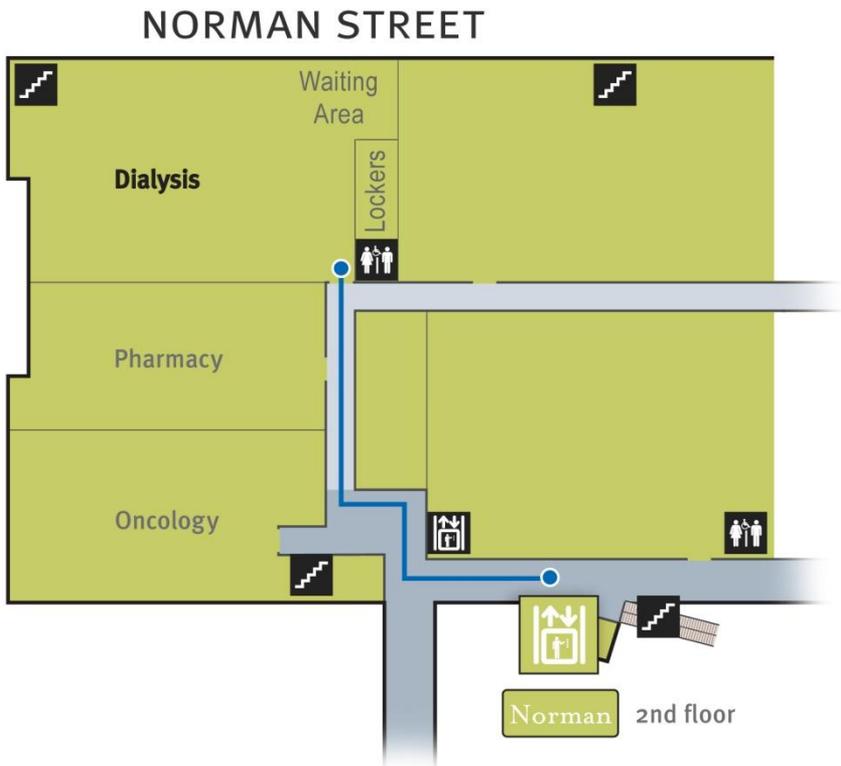
## ABOUT OUR UNIT



Bluewater Health's Dialysis Unit is a 15 station unit that cares for the medically stable patients in Sarnia-Lambton. We are located on Level 2, Norman Building at Bluewater Health, Sarnia.

Fire exits are located at the north and west ends of the unit. Exits are outlined below.

Washrooms are located beside the waiting room and in the center of the Dialysis Unit.



# BEGINNING DIALYSIS



## Understanding Your Dialysis Treatment

It is important for you to understand as much as possible about your dialysis treatment, medications, and blood test results. If you have any questions, please ask!

### Upon Arrival

When you enter the unit, weigh yourself and take your temperature. The nurses will show you how to do this.

Please wait in the Dialysis Patient Waiting Area until you are called. Someone will come and get you.

### Starting the Dialysis Treatment

Your blood pressure will be taken standing up and sitting. Your blood pressure and weight help us decide how much fluid will be removed during your dialysis treatment.

Your dialysis access is the place from which the blood is removed and returned to your body during dialysis. You may have a fistula, graft, subclavian catheter, or perm-cath.

If you have a fistula or graft, the skin around the site will be cleaned before the needles are inserted. If you have a subclavian catheter or perm-cath, the nurse will clean the site and change the dressing regularly. No one but a dialysis nurse is to use the perm-cath.

## YOUR SCHEDULE



You have been scheduled for treatments on:

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We do our best to schedule dialysis treatment to meet the individual needs of each patient (i.e. employment, schooling, transportation). However, sometime this can be quite a challenge due to the busy nature of the Dialysis Unit.

If you have a specific request, please speak to your nurse or charge nurse. It is important to understand that it may not always be possible to accommodate your specific request.

## DURING YOUR TREATMENT



### Routine Checks

Routine checks are done each hour during your dialysis treatment. Please let the nurses know if you feel unwell (light-headed, dizzy, headache, upset stomach, cramps, etc.). This will allow us to make changes in your treatment and make you more comfortable.

### Eating on Dialysis

Your treatment may last three to four hours, so it is important to eat before arriving. Food is not provided during dialysis. If you are diabetic, you will need to bring a snack.

If you choose to eat during dialysis, please eat a light meal or snack near the beginning of the treatment. Eating later in the treatment or having a heavy meal during dialysis may cause large drops in blood pressure causing you to feel unwell.

## THE END OF YOUR TREATMENT

Your blood pressure and weight are checked again at the end of your treatment. If you have a fistula or graft you need to remain in the unit until your needle sites have stopped bleeding.

Sometimes people feel dizzy or light-headed at the end of dialysis. If your blood pressure is low or you feel dizzy or light-headed, the nurse may ask you to stay in the unit until your blood pressure increases and you feel better. Please remember this is done out of concern for your safety.

## MEDICATIONS



When you begin dialysis, continue taking your medications as prescribed. In the first few weeks of dialysis your medications will be reviewed and changes may be made. Any changes will be explained to you.

You may continue to use your community pharmacy. Prescription renewals should be obtained at the clinic. Our program will not take renewal requests by telephone or fax.

A few medications are provided free of charge from the Dialysis Program if you get them from an London Health Sciences Centre Pharmacy. These include calcium, some phosphate binders and replavite.

**It is important that we have an up-to-date list of all medications you are taking.**

If your family physician, a specialist, or any other doctor prescribes a new medication, or changes the dose of one of your medications, please bring the bottle/box to dialysis for us to look at

Approximately once a month you will be asked to bring in your medications for us to review. This is to make sure we have an accurate and up-to-date list of your medications, and renewals can be requested at this time.

### **Home Remedies, Herbal and Non-Prescription Medications.**

Please let your nurse or nurse practitioner know if you are taking any non-prescription medications or other “natural” medications or supplements. These may interact with your prescribed medications. It is possible that they are not recommended for people on dialysis.

# TELEPHONE NUMBERS



## Bluewater Health

Main Line, Switchboard.....519-464-4400

Dialysis Unit (Monday to Saturday, 7:00 am to 11:00 pm)

Ext. 5313

Ext. 5113

Charge Nurse.....Ext. 5634

Manager.....Ext. 5507

## London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC)

Main Line, Switchboard.....519-685-8500

**Regional Hemodialysis Centre** .....519-685-8253

**Kidney Foundation** .....519-344-3462

## Transportation

Sarnia Care-a-Van.....519-336-3789

Lambton Elderly Outreach.....519-845-1353

**Bluewater Health**  
89 Norman Street  
Sarnia, Ontario  
N7T 6S3  
Tel: (519) 464-4400



[www.bluewaterhealth.ca](http://www.bluewaterhealth.ca)

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