

5 Things to Do if You've Just Been Diagnosed with Kidney Disease



Learning you or a loved one has chronic kidney disease (CKD) or end stage kidney disease (ESKD) can be overwhelming. The good news is, you're not alone on your kidney care journey. Here are five things you can do to take control of your health now.

1. Find a kidney doctor.

You'll want to find a kidney doctor, or nephrologist, as soon as possible. Your nephrologist is there to partner with you and guide you to understanding what life is like with kidney disease and how best to adapt to treatments and medications while maintaining your quality of life. When you talk with a nephrologist, you may want to start by asking, "How can I lead a 'normal' life when I go on dialysis?" Read and print [Working with a Nephrologist](#) for more questions to ask your doctor.

2. Create a support team.

In addition to your care team, which will likely include your doctor, nurses, dietitian, and social worker, you'll also need the support of your loved ones. Let your family and friends know about your diagnosis and that you may need their help in the future.

3. Connect with others in the kidney community.

There are many support groups and social media groups for people with CKD and their care partners, including the myDaVita forums on DaVita.com. Here, you can introduce yourself to the community and join discussions on topics ranging from treatment options to kidney diet tips. It may help to connect online with others who can relate to what you're going through.

4. Learn all you can about kidney health.

Your renal social worker, dietitian, nurse, or doctor can answer your questions about CKD. However, it will help to learn everything you can about kidney health—including about diet. (For example, many people with CKD must limit fluids and specific nutrients such as potassium or phosphorus.) This can help you feel more empowered as you adjust to living with CKD.

A great way to learn the basics of kidney disease is with a no-cost, online Kidney Smart® class. Classes cover CKD basics, diet and nutrition, understanding the importance of insurance and staying employed, and more. [Find a class here.](#)

5. Continue to do what you love.

Having kidney disease may require some lifestyle changes, but it doesn't mean you can't still do the things you enjoy. DaVita offers treatment options for different lifestyles and schedules, including in-center dialysis, nocturnal dialysis (done in-center overnight), and home dialysis. Talk to your nephrologist about which treatment option might be best for you.