

Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis

When you have Chronic Kidney Disease, you may need dialysis. One type of dialysis is peritoneal, and there are two kinds – automated and continuous ambulatory. In both, your blood is cleaned inside your body. With continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis, or CAPD, you can be much more mobile, because this type of dialysis doesn't require you to be attached to a machine to clean your blood.

In CAPD, the blood is filtered daily through a lining in your abdomen, called the peritoneum. A special washing solution, called dialysate, is emptied into your abdomen through a tube inserted near your belly button. Over the next few hours, the solution slowly removes the waste products and extra water from your blood. Then you drain the solution through the tube and repeat this process. This is known as an exchange and for most people, this is needed about 4 times a day.

"It was life changing." – Nona, Patient

Nona Rowen, chose CAPD when her kidneys were failing because she wanted more flexibility with her dialysis. CAPD patients can do their exchanges at work, home or school instead of going to a dialysis center.

"I did it here at about 5:30 in the morning, six o'clock. I did it at my desk around lunch because I had an office that had a door. So that was easy to close off. I did it when I came home from work and I did it before I went to bed at night." – Nona, Patient

The CAPD process starts with surgery to place a catheter for dialysis.

"It's a tube in the abdomen. It's about a half hour procedure." – Dr. Allan Roza, Vascular Access Surgeon

The patient then uses that tube to do the continuous dialysis, as the name implies, 24-hours a day.

"You may hook yourself up to a bag of this glucose solution, fill your abdomen with this solution and then you may walk around throughout for several hours doing your activities and going to work. Those kinds of things. Then you come and you empty that fluid, and you fill yourself up again at the same time with another bag of solution." – Dr. Aaron Dall Nephrologist, Kidney Specialist

Your health care team will teach you what's involved with CAPD. It definitely will mean some lifestyle changes.

"You're assigned a nurse and they train you on how to do the dialysis, what's involved and how to start it and stop it." – Nona, Patient

"It's something that I knew four times a day. I had to do I had to take care of my own health." – Nona, Patient

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"The patients are wonderful about keeping up with that. Keeping a timer on their phone or elsewhere to let them know or remind them ok it's time to do this." – Dr. Aaron Dall Nephrologist, Kidney Specialist

Keeping your catheter area clean and free of germs is also important, to avoid infection.

"It's using alcohol wipes. It's using other sterile wipes that we provide patients and then using appropriate techniques like hand washing and wearing gloves when you're handling your catheter." – Dr. Aaron Dall Nephrologist, Kidney Specialist

CAPD definitely takes some getting used to, but for Nona, it was worth it.

"I chose to do peritoneal dialysis for the flexibility and because it allowed me to live my life just the way I was doing it before." – Nona, Patient