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This booklet was written by the members of the Intermountain ESRD Network Patient Leadership Committee, all of whom are ESRD patients. The illustrations were created and copyrighted by artist Bradley Hayes.

These suggestions pertain to those patients using standard in-center hemodialysis.

If you are not using a fistula, please talk to your doctor to see if you can use one.

Avoid using catheters as a vascular access if at all possible. If you are using a fistula, learn how to help keep it working.

Do you feel as good as you should?



Is your hemodialysis treatment the best that it can be? Look at your lab reports and in particular, the $spKt/V$.



If your $spKt/V$ is 1.2 or higher (the minimum Medicare-recommended value), then your treatment may be adequate.



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But what if this number is not what it should be? Or what if it is, and you're still not feeling well?



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What can be done to raise this number so that you can feel better? As a start, there are things you can do that don't require a doctor:



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Stay on the machine for your prescribed amount of time and don't skip treatments.

Improve your diet. You should consult your dietician.

Check with your nurse or with your doctor to see if you should cut down on how much you drink.

For other steps, you'll need to discuss some issues with your doctor. Ask if you can:

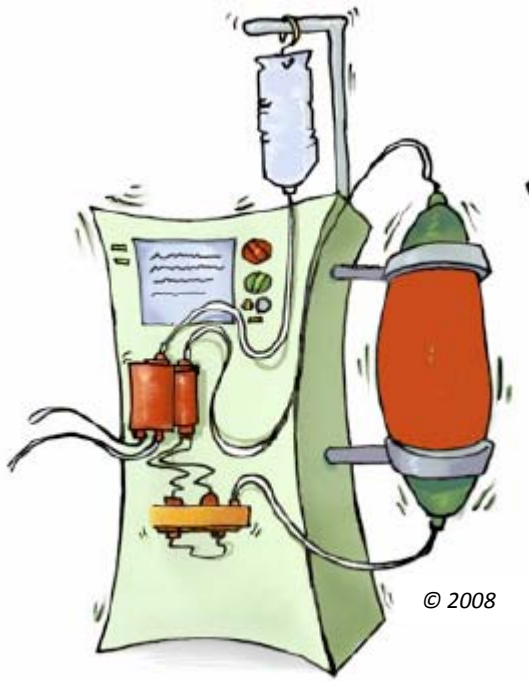
Increase the time on the machine.

Increase the pump speed of the dialysis machine so more of your blood is processed at each treatment.

Start exercising or exercise more.



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Increase the dialyzer size (the dialyzer is the round long tube usually found attached to either the left or right of your machine). This will help to increase the volume of blood being cleaned.

Increase the amount of iron and/or Epogen™ you are given.



Now that you have educated yourself, talk with your doctor and bring up the points you've come to understand.

Remember, you are as much a part of your dialysis treatment as your doctor. The doctor understands far more about the dialysis treatment than you ever will, but only you know how well you feel.

Take charge of your health care and become a member of your health care team.

