



“What Happens When I Stop Dialysis?”

The decision to discontinue dialysis treatment is a profoundly personal one. Patients and families often ask us what they can expect when dialysis ends. We believe supportive hospice care is essential to planning and preparation and we are committed to ensuring our patients and their loved ones experience a “good death”.

Life Expectancy

The average life expectancy for a hospice patient after discontinuation of dialysis is 7 to 10 days, though some patients live as long as a few weeks to a month. Hospice staff can assist families in preparation for this transition.

Symptoms

When dialysis ends, patients may experience some or all of the following:

- As toxins build up in the body, you may become increasingly drowsy
- Usually there is little pain
- Your appetite may decrease
- You may experience some restlessness
- Symptoms such as fluid overload, congestion, or muscle spasms can be managed with medications

How Hospice Can Help

The end-of-life experience can be peaceful and a patient can pass with dignity when provided with appropriate intervention. Hospice staff provide expert care and guidance during this time. Hospice can assist with:

- Development of Advance Directives
- End-of-life planning
- Assistance to create an environment in which family and friends can reminisce and spend time together
- Clinical assessment and intervention
- Medication management
- Symptom management
- Life review and Legacy work
- Emotional support
- Spiritual counseling
- Personal Care
- Provision of medications, supplies, and Durable Medical Equipment
- Volunteer support
- Bereavement support for the family for up to 13 months

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