Altru Renal Dialysis in Grand Forks is located on the main level of Altru Hospital near Urgent Care. The Emergency Room entrance provides the closest access to the dialysis unit. The front entrance of the hospital is staffed with a doorman M-F | 7:30 - 4:30 p.m. to assist patients to and from the dialysis unit as well.
Altru Renal Dialysis in Devils Lake is located on the second level of Mercy Hospital. It can be reached using the elevators near the front entrance. After exiting the elevator on the 1st floor, take a right and continue down the hall to the dialysis unit.

Altru Renal Dialysis at LifeCare Medical Center, Roseau is located in the lower level of the LifeCare building. We ask you use the entrance on the back side of the building, behind Altru Clinic. The entrance is also used for Cardiac Rehab. There is an elevator and steps available to access the lower level. The dialysis unit is located near the business office.

Altru Renal Dialysis at Altru Clinic Crookston is located in the lower level of the Altru Clinic building. We ask you use the main clinic entrance during normal business hours after 7:30 a.m. There is an elevator available to take you to the lower level. Before 7:30 please use the RiverView Hospital main entrance. There is an elevator to the left of the reception desk which will take you to the lower level of the Altru Clinic. Once on the lower level there are signs to direct you to the dialysis unit.
WELCOME

You have now made one of your first visits to the Renal Dialysis Unit. It is our goal to keep you well informed about your plan of care. To assist us with this goal, we have developed this Patient and Family Handbook for you. The book is yours to keep and is intended to be a quick reference for questions or concerns that you or your family may have throughout your treatments.

We are aware of the stress induced by kidney disease and its treatment on patients, families and friends. Knowing this, we have developed a comprehensive care center with staff available to help you solve or deal with problems. We have included helpful suggestions to frequently asked questions and concerns.

We encourage you to use this informative handbook frequently. It will help you to become familiar with Altru Health System’s Renal Dialysis Unit.

This handbook is not intended to replace personal contact with the staff. You should always feel free to call us. See page 2 for contact information.

We are hopeful that this handbook will assist you in reaching a mutual goal of providing individual quality care for each patient. Please keep this handbook as a reference. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in your care.

Sincerely,

Altru Renal Dialysis Staff
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The Altru Hospital Renal Dialysis Unit was opened in September, 1974, as a satellite of the Regional Kidney Disease Program (RKDP), located at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In July, 1976, the Renal Dialysis Unit was expanded to accommodate more patients.

In December, 1980, our first acute hemodialysis patient was dialyzed in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

As of June 1, 1982, we were no longer a satellite of the Regional Kidney Disease Program. Patients who qualified for a transplant or home hemodialysis were referred to Hennepin County Medical Center, Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota, Fargo Transplant Services, Bismarck Transplant Service or to a transplant center of their choice, for consultation.

On July 15, 1982, we moved to a new facility. We had nine chronic stations and one inpatient room. We had two rooms in the Intensive Care Unit. We are also able to do dialysis during surgery, as well as, in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit.

In October, 1985, we received approval for peritoneal dialysis home training. Our program has steadily grown since that time, including the addition of our cycler program in July, 1992.

In December, 1995, we once again expanded the dialysis unit, moving to the northwest corner of the hospital. We now have 13 hemodialysis stations with possible expansion in the future. We also have the ability to do CRRT (Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy) in the intensive care units for critical patients (both the ICU and SCCU).

In January, 1997, Altru Hospital opened up a satellite unit at Mercy Hospital in Devils Lake. This 5 station unit treats outpatient hemodialysis patients only.

In June 2012, Altru Hospital opened its 2nd satellite unit at LifeCare Medical Center in Roseau, MN. This is a 6 station unit, treating outpatient hemodialysis patients.

In June 2013 a 3rd satellite unit opened in Crookston, MN. It is an 8 station unit located in the lower level of Altru Clinic. This unit treats only outpatient hemodialysis patients as well.

The Altru Health System board is informed of changes and quality improvements as necessary or at least yearly through a report to the board by the dialysis unit director. Representation for the dialysis unit has been given to a specific Altru Health System board member.
This handbook is designed to answer your questions about renal dialysis, the services we offer and how you can best participate in your own care. If you have additional questions, please call one of the following members of our patient care team.

Grand Forks Dialysis ................................................................. 701.780.5870
Devils Lake Dialysis ............................................................... 701.665.5241
Roseau Dialysis ................................................................. 218.463.4770
Crookston Dialysis ............................................................... 218.281.9872
Dialysis Manager ................................................................. 701.780.5877
Medical Director (Altru Hospital) ........................................... 701.780.6211
Social Worker (Altru Hospital) ............................................... 701.780.5372
Renal Dietitian (Altru Hospital) ............................................... 701.780.1556
Financial Counselor (Altru Hospital) ....................................... 701.780.5222
Administration (Altru Hospital) ............................................... 701.780.5200

If you are unable to reach any of the above people, call the hospital switchboard at 701.780.5000. They will contact the appropriate person and have him/her return your call.

**NOTE:** After hours you can leave a message for the nursing staff.

Additional information can be located on Altru’s website.

www.altru.org/services/renal-dialysis
RENAL DISEASE

Altru Health System is involved in treating many aspects of kidney disease, such as kidney stones, hypertension and the treatment of acute and chronic renal failure. Both acute and chronic renal failure are treated in the Renal Dialysis Unit at Altru Hospital, but the main emphasis is directed toward long-term treatment of chronic or end-stage renal disease.

The satellite units in Devils Lake, Roseau and Crookston are involved in the treatment of chronic renal failure.

Acute Renal Failure

Acute renal failure is defined as rapid failure of kidney functions occurring in a matter of hours or days. This is potentially reversible with the proper medical treatment.

There are many possible causes of acute renal failure including severe shock and reduced blood supply to the kidneys (as in internal bleeding or multiple body injuries), certain types of poisoning, specific types of glomerulonephritis (a kidney disease) and injury to or blockage of the blood vessels leading to the kidneys. Dialysis may be used to assist the patient during this period of recovery.

Individuals with Acute Renal failure will dialyze at the dialysis unit within Altru Hospital, Grand Forks.

Chronic Renal Failure

Chronic renal failure results from the most severe kidney diseases. Chronic renal failure differs from acute renal failure in that it is irreversible and the destruction of the kidney usually occurs over a long period of time. The patient may not have realized the progression of the disease until it is in the final stages.

There are many diseases which can damage the various small components of the kidneys such as: infection, inflammation, polycystic kidney disease, high blood pressure (hypertension), arteriosclerosis and diabetes.

Chronic renal failure is permanent. The kidneys will not recover or improve. When kidney damage results in a severe reduction of kidney function, peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis or kidney transplantation is required to sustain life. This is known as end-stage renal dialysis (ESRD).

Individuals with Chronic Renal Failure will have the option of dialyzing in Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Roseau or Crookston after meeting necessary criteria. (see page 5)

WHO RECEIVES TREATMENT

If a patient is unable to continue life without treatment and has a desire to live, the criteria necessary for acceptance to the treatment program has been met. The professional treatment staff is available to discuss this with you in detail.

There are many factors to consider when making such a crucial decision. Altru Health System acknowledges that chronic treatment is not appropriate for all people at all times. A doctor, social worker and chaplain are available to discuss this with you and your family. All patients will be treated on an individual basis.
TYPES OF TREATMENT

Dialysis is a process that removes excess fluids and accumulated waste products from the body.

**Hemodialysis**

This form of treatment is done through the blood stream. A temporary access (catheter) may be placed in your chest until surgery for a permanent access can be done. A permanent access usually involves a graft or a fistula. This access allows connection of the blood stream to the artificial kidney machine. As the blood flows through the kidney machine and back into the body, waste products and excess fluid are removed. The duration of this treatment varies initially. On a chronic basis, treatment continues for approximately 3-4 hours, 3 times a week.

**Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)**

This form of treatment uses the peritoneum (the lining of the abdomen). A permanent catheter is placed into the abdominal cavity connecting the peritoneal dialysis setup or cycler machine. Chronic Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) consists of infusing a special fluid into the abdominal cavity. After the fluid has been in the abdomen for a prescribed period of time, it is drained into a bag by gravity. This treatment is done 3-4 times a day, taking a half hour at a time. Excess fluid and accumulated waste products are removed from the body this way. This treatment can also be done with a machine called a cycler. Each cycler treatment continues for approximately ten hours, every night at bedtime.

Education for this type of treatment is done at Altru Hospital in Grand Forks. Patients are followed at the Grand Forks unit.

**Kidney Transplantation**

During kidney transplantation, a new kidney is surgically placed into the patient's body. This new kidney may have come from a living related or unrelated donor or from a cadaver. Transplantation is a possible treatment option for those patients who meet the established criteria for age and physical condition. Persons receiving a kidney transplant no longer need chronic dialysis if the kidney functions sufficiently. Dialysis may be necessary for a short time following transplantation until the new kidney starts to function. You will be given additional information describing transplantation in more detail if you are interested.

LOCATION OF TREATMENT

Hemodialysis, both acute and chronic, and peritoneal dialysis are available to patients treated at Altru Hospital. However, only outpatient chronic dialysis is provided in the satellite units of Devils Lake, Roseau and Crookston.

**Acute Dialysis**

Very ill patients with kidney failure are hospitalized in one of the Intensive Care Units at Altru Hospital and receive dialysis at the bedside.

**Inpatient Dialysis**

While in the hospital, dialysis patients will be transferred to the Inpatient Dialysis Unit for treatment at Altru Hospital.
**Chronic Dialysis - Grand Forks**

The Renal Dialysis Unit is located on the second (main) level of Altru Hospital in the west wing. Hemodialysis is available in this facility for patients who live in Grand Forks and the surrounding area. Dialysis patients visiting in the area may receive dialysis here by making prior arrangements.

**Chronic Dialysis - Satellites**

All new patients will be initiated at the Grand Forks unit. Initial consults with social work, dietitian, and financial advisory will be completed in Grand Forks. Once space becomes available and the doctor determines the patient is stable, a transfer to the satellite unit will be arranged. The Devils Lake satellite unit is located on the second level of Mercy Hospital. The Roseau dialysis unit is located in the LifeCare Medical Center building below Altru Clinic. The Crookston satellite unit is located on the lower level of the Altru Clinic.

**Home Dialysis**

Home dialysis training is available for the hemodialysis patient by referral to the nearest center. Peritoneal dialysis patient training is done at Altru by trained renal staff. After the completion of training, patients then receive their dialysis treatment in their own homes.

**Peritoneal Dialysis**

The necessary patient and/or family training for PD is done at Altru Hospital by qualified staff. This training takes place for approximately 8 to 10 visits. After completion of training, our PD staff will monitor the patients during clinic visits or possibly during home visits. Clinic visits are set up in the Renal Dialysis Unit, Altru Hospital, Grand Forks.

**Kidney Transplants**

Kidney transplants from our facility are often done at Fargo Transplant Services, Bismarck Transplant Services, Hennepin County Medical Center, the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis or Mayo Clinic in Rochester. The patient is hospitalized for two to four weeks following a kidney transplant. There is a follow-up period after discharge from the hospital and the patient must remain in the area. Following this period, care is transferred to the patient's private physician with regular follow-up care at the transplant center.
HEPATITIS AND HIV

Hepatitis is a potential problem in dialysis treatment due to contact with blood. Those patients having hepatitis (determined by a blood test) are isolated to eliminate the spread of hepatitis to other patients and staff. Routine screening is performed on all patients and staff members to detect the presence of the hepatitis virus. If a patient or staff member contracts hepatitis, he/she is notified immediately and instructed in the necessary precautions. These patients will be dialyzed at the Altru Hospital unit only. Patients who have not received the hepatitis vaccine will start this at the dialysis unit.

In the rare event that a person with HIV is treated in the Renal Dialysis unit at Altru Hospital, patient isolation and other necessary precautions would be implemented. HIV testing is done upon the start of dialysis, we require a signature on a consent form for permission.

ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE

Admission to the Renal Dialysis Unit
Patients may be admitted to our Renal Dialysis Unit for the following reasons:
» Patient elects to start dialysis after decreased kidney function.
» Patient rejects a kidney transplant.
» Patient is transferred from another unit.
» Patient can no longer dialyze at home.
» Patient is visiting the area for a short time (transient patient).
» Patient's plan of care is considered on an individual basis.

Admission to Satellite Units
» All patients will be seen at Altru Hospital dialysis unit for several dialysis treatments before transferring to a satellite unit.
» Patients will be transferred according to waiting list status and patient medical status.

Discharge from the Renal Dialysis Unit
Altru patients may be transferred to another facility or discharged from Altru for the following reasons:
» Patient receives a kidney transplant.
» Patient regains kidney function.
» Hemodialysis can no longer be performed for various medical reasons.
» Patient goes on home dialysis.
» Patient decides to discontinue dialysis after professional consultation.
» Patient refuses to follow the policies and procedures established for him/her in the individual's plan of care.
FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Our social worker and financial worker can provide assistance with your financial needs by locating the appropriate resources to help you with financial difficulties. Listed below are some the agencies and programs.

**Social Security Disability**

» Supplemental Security Income (SSI): To qualify you must have a physical or mental condition that will prevent you from being gainfully employed for a year or more and have a financial need. If approved, payments generally start within a month of approval. People who have no work history or haven’t paid enough into Social Security (20 consecutive quarters before the time they stopped working) may qualify for this program.

» Social Security Disability Income: To qualify you must be physically or mentally disabled and have paid into Social Security 20 consecutive quarters (5 years) prior to the time you were no longer able to work. If approved the first check would come approximately 6 months after the time you were last able to work.

Apply for Social Security Disability either by visiting/calling your local office or by calling the national toll free number 800.772.1213 and setting up an appointment for a telephone or in-person interview.

**Commercial Disability Insurance:** Some employers purchase or offer group plans for their employees, check with your human resource department to see if there is a disability insurance.

**Medical Assistance:** Is a state program that assists with medical costs and is based on medical, as well as, financial need. You apply through your Local County Social Service Center.

» North Dakota Medical Assistance: If you are between the ages of 21 and 65 (unless you have dependent children) you will not be approved for medical assistance unless you are determined to be disabled by social security, regardless of financial need. You need to apply at the same time you apply for Social Security Disability because once you are determined disabled, ND Medical Assistance will go back as far as 3 months prior to the time you applied and may possibly pay your medical expenses. This program is also based on financial need and you will need to provide financial information.

» Minnesota Medical Assistance: Does not require you to be determined disabled by Social Security but you do have to show a medical and financial need. They will also consider payment of medical expenses 3 month prior to the time you applied.

» Minnesota Care: Is for MN residents who are over income limits for Medical Assistance. It does not pay prior medical expenses, only the ones you incur after approval.

**County Social Services:** Your local county social services may be able to provide you with food assistance, fuel assistance, and emergency general assistance.

**Third Street Clinic:** Is for Grand Forks and Polk County residents who have a physical and financial need, and have not yet or will not qualify for medical assistance. The program can help with some medications and future doctor appointments. To apply call 772.1263 for an appointment.
**Drug Assistance Programs:** Some drug manufacturers have patient assistance programs that would provide free medications to individuals who qualify financially and medically. This is usually for individuals who don't have insurance coverage for medications.

**Hardship Discount Application:** This is available for the clinic and hospital bills. You may qualify after you have applied to medical assistance and they have not paid all your expenses, or you were denied coverage by the program.

### LODGING

**Parkwood Place**

If you need an affordable place to stay while receiving treatment at Altru Health System, Parkwood Place could be the next best thing to home. Parkwood offers the security of being on Altru’s campus and the convenience of transportation to and from Altru Health System. Staying at Parkwood Place could eliminate any worries you may have about traveling to Grand Forks for your care.

Parkwood’s furnished apartments feature a kitchen and vary in size from efficiency apartments to two bedroom suites. You can cook your own meals, eat in Parkwood’s dining room, or have a meal delivered to your apartment. Choose what works best for you on any given day. There are many options at Parkwood Place, but one thing is certain: Parkwood’s relaxing atmosphere and caring staff will make you feel at home.

The number for Parkwood Place is 701.780.2600.

Furnished apartments include a fully-equipped kitchen, private bath, telephone, television with basic cable, flat linen service, security, and emergency call system. Personal care assistance is available for an additional fee.

For more detailed information about Parkwood Place visit www.altru.org

**Motels**

The hospital front desk has a current list of area motels. Many offer a medical discount rate.

**Nursing Homes**

There are two skilled nursing facilities in Grand Forks. Valley Eldercare is located on Medical Park next to Altru. Valley 4000 is located off of the Altru campus. Both facilities provide full nursing care. The contact number is 701.787.7900.
TRANSPORTATION

WITHIN GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS

MEDICAL PARK CAMPUS SHUTTLE: We have heated golf cart shuttles stationed at the main clinic and hospital. The shuttles are often used by our patients staying at Parkwood Place. You can request a ride by asking any staff member. The hours of operation are from 8:30 am until 4:00 pm Monday-Friday, except holidays.

DIAL A RIDE is a discounted transportation service for individuals with physical needs. The application process usually takes two weeks; however, the service can be used during this time for full fare. The city bus and local taxi companies are the providers of this service utilizing standard taxis and wheelchair vans. To apply for Dial A Ride call 701.746.2600.

CITY BUS service is available in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Please see the posted schedule in the Cancer Center main lobby entrance.

TAXI service is available in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks through Grand Forks Taxi 701.780.8890 and Nodak Cab 701.772.3456. If you have a medical assistance card you may be able to charge the fare to medical assistance (your monthly spend down would have to be met).

SENIOR CITIZENS BUS may be able to assist with medical transportation and is available to both East Grand Forks and Grand Forks residents.

OUTSIDE OF GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS

COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES may be able to help with transportation if you qualify for medical assistance. They may help in the following ways: provide a driver; approve a medical transport van ride, or reimburse you or a driver of your choice for mileage related to medical appointments or care. Contact your local county social services to find out if you would qualify.

If you have further questions or concerns about lodging or transportation, please contact the Renal Dialysis social worker through any staff member.

SERVICES IN YOUR HOME

Altru Home Services

Altru Home Services is part of Altru Health System. Its home-based services include: infusion therapy, respiratory care, medical equipment and supplies, rehabilitative equipment, home care, physical, speech and occupational therapies and hospice.

Altru Home Services exists to achieve optimum health for all residents in our region. This is accomplished through health education, preventive services, early intervention, and provision of appropriate care.

Altru Home Services offers products and services which facilitate either directly or indirectly each person’s ability to function as independently as possible. Ultimately, Altru Home Services provides alternatives for long-term health care with less need for institutionalization. Individuals will be able to remain in the home setting for a longer period.
Home Care

Home Care and Physical, Speech and Occupational Therapies provide intermittent or part-time skilled services to patients in their home under the direction of a physician. Services are based upon individual needs and may include medical social workers or home health aides. They are not covered to do dialysis therapy or peritoneal dialysis exchanges.

Services Available
» Post-hospital care
» Ostomy care
» Medication management
» Wound care
» Catheter care
» Patient teaching
» Pain and symptom management

Team Members
» Registered nurses (24-hour access)
» Licensed practical nurses
» Social workers
» Home health aides
» Clergy
» Physical, speech and occupational therapists
» Specially trained volunteers

Insurance Coverage
Generally, services are covered when qualifying criteria is met. Services are eligible for coverage by North Dakota and Minnesota Blue Cross, Medicare, Medicaid and other commercial and private insurance companies.

Altru Home Services will bill your insurance company for your Home Care.

Please do not hesitate to call Altru Home Services if you need assistance in determining if you meet your insurance company’s qualifying criteria.

Referrals
Patient referrals can originate from personal physicians, community agencies, caregivers, friends, family members and patients themselves.

Contacting Us
For information on Altru Home Services or Home Care, call 701.780.5888 or 800.545.5615.
Communities with Home Care are Grand Forks, Park River, Grafton, McVille, Cavalier, Devils Lake and Warren, MN. If you live outside of the Altru service area or are interested in finding out about other providers please contact the Social Worker.

**Hospice**

The end of life stage deserves to be peaceful, dignified and comfortable. For many, it can be an overwhelming, stressful and fearful experience for both the patient and their loved ones. Altru’s Hospice understands the dying process affects everyone differently and uses a comprehensive team to develop a custom care plan that specifically treats the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the patient and their loved ones.

**Hospice Care**

- Provides palliative or comfort care rather than curative treatment in the patient's home, nursing home or hospital setting
- Emphasizes maintaining the highest quality of life through therapy, counseling and pain management rather than a focus on extending the length of life
- Provides supplies, medicine and equipment needed to maintain quality of life
- Supports family and caregivers through counseling, training and education

**Services Available**

- Bereavement support for all ages
- Volunteer support services
- Spiritual support services
- Pain and symptom management
- Psychosocial support services
- Aide services

**Team Members**

- Physicians
- Social workers
- Chaplains
- Therapists
- Registered nurses (24-hour access)
- Aides
- Bereavement counselors
- Specially trained volunteers
Insurance Coverage
Generally, services are covered when qualifying criteria is met. Services are eligible for coverage by North Dakota and Minnesota Blue Cross, Medicare, Medicaid and other commercial and private insurance companies.

Altru Home Services will bill your insurance company for your Hospice care.

Referrals
Patient referrals can originate from personal physicians, community agencies, caregivers, friends, family members and patients themselves.

Contacting Us
For information on Altru Home Services or Hospice, call 701.780.5258 or 800.545.5615.

Personal Care Service Area

Communities with Hospice are shown in bold black. If you live outside of the Altru service area, or are interested in finding out about other providers, please contact Altru Hospice at 701.780.5258 or 800.545.5615.

Home Delivered Meals
Home delivered meals may be an option in your community. Please contact the renal social worker or dietitian to inquire about available services.

Homemaker Services
Homemaker services include light housekeeping, laundry and running errands for individuals in need. These services may be provided through your local county social services on a sliding fee scale. To find out if you qualify, contact your local county social services and ask for the Adult Service Social Worker. If the county does not have homemakers on staff you may qualify for funds to hire a private homemaker or these services may be provided through organizations that offers home health personal care services.
**Doctors**

When patients are started on dialysis, a nephrologist (a doctor specializing in kidney disease) takes over kidney related care and will see patients while they are having dialysis. A primary or family doctor is necessary to coordinate care for other medical issues.

**Midlevels**

A Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant may also visit patients while they are having dialysis (in person or by Tele-Medicine).

**Nurses**

Registered nurses are on staff in all of Altru’s dialysis units. Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are involved in patient teaching, care planning, primary nursing, and staff training. They have received special education in kidney disease.

**Primary Nurse**

A primary nurse will be assigned to you upon initiation of dialysis. Your primary nurse will be responsible for your patient teaching, admission assessment, reviewing medications with you and answering any questions you may have. All nurses in the unit will care for you and are also available for help with any questions.

**Renal Social Worker**

Altru Hospital provides counseling for all persons with kidney disease and their families. Initially, every patient is seen by a social worker who obtains a detailed social history to become familiar with the patient and his/her family early in the treatment process. The social worker is also available to:

1. Discuss the different treatment options available under the direction of the provider.
2. Provide supportive counseling
3. Provide assistance in making decisions
5. Identify resources for renal patients within each community.
6. Facilitate nursing home placements.
7. Set up care conferences.
8. Arrange dialysis at another unit in the event of travel

It is the goal of the social worker to help you and your family retain your desired lifestyle and help you keep a positive and realistic attitude.

**Financial Resource Counselor**

Financial resource counselors are highly specialized consultants available to assist you in many areas, including:

1. Assessment of your health insurance plans and the coverage provided, as well as recommending additional insurance plans that may be available to you.
2. Assessment of other benefits that may be available through your employer, such as sick leave, leave of absence, long-term disability benefits, health and life insurance, including conversion privileges if you leave your current employment.

3. Assessment of your need and eligibility for federal assistance programs.

4. Assistance with application for Medicare benefits. (Most people meet the Social Security eligibility requirements.)

5. Coordination of financial concerns with the Renal Social Worker.

**Renal Dietitian**

Nutritional assessment and counseling by a registered dietitian is provided to all patients. Dietary requirements may change during the progression of your kidney disease. Your diet may be revised over a period of time to compensate for changes in kidney function. The reason for dietary adjustments and the diet itself will be explained by a dietitian whenever a change is made or whenever you have questions. Nutritional status plays a very important role in the way you feel, your ability to resist disease and the speed of your healing. If for some reason you have problems maintaining good nutrition, the dietitian will make suggestions to alternatives, supplements or special products which you may use. The dietitian will also review monthly labs with you.

**PLANNING LONG-TERM CARE (CONFERENCE CARE)**

Due to the long-term nature of end stage renal disease (ESRD), continuous planning for your care is necessary. Your participation in this planning is very important. We encourage you and your family to take an active role in developing your care plan.

Yearly, you will be asked to participate in a care conference. A care conference involves your primary nurse, social worker, dietitian and anyone else you may want involved, including family and friends. A care conference allows you to discuss concerns you may want to discuss in private.

At your care conference, make the most of your time with the team. You may request a care conference at any time. You may also choose not to participate in your annual conference.

**HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CARE CONFERENCE**

» Don’t be afraid to tell the doctor how you are feeling. Side effects are normal and do not indicate the success or failure of treatment.

» Ask the doctor what can be done to relieve your symptoms.

» Let the doctor know about your quality of life priorities. Do you need to work full time? Are you a single parent with small children to care for? This may affect the doctor’s approach to your treatment and supportive therapy.

» Do your homework. Educate yourself about your disease so you will know what to ask the doctor during your visits. You will also have a better idea of what to expect from your treatment.

» Come prepared with questions. Write them down so you don’t forget what to ask.
» Listen carefully when the doctor talks with you. Communication is a two-way street, it is important for you and your doctor to listen to each other. You may want to take notes or bring someone with you to your appointments.

» Ask about your options. Show the doctor that you want to take an active role in your care so that you can decide together what will be the best treatment option for you.

» Always bring the latest updated list of your medications.

These are some questions that other patients and families have asked. You or your family may want to discuss these with your doctor. Ask the questions important to you, and feel free to add other questions you or your family have.

What are my treatment options?

What are the benefits of treatment versus no treatment for me?

If I take treatment, how long will it take each time?

If I take treatment, how will we know if it is working?

What side effects can I expect?

- Will I be able to drive myself to and from treatment?

- Will I be able to work and/or take care of my family during treatment?

List any other questions you or your family may have:
HOW TO REVIEW YOUR BLOOD TEST RESULTS

Overview

Laboratory tests often referred to as “labs” are tools helpful in evaluating the health status of an individual. It is important to realize that labs may be outside of the so-called “normal range” for many reasons. These variations may be due to such things as race, diet, age, sex, menstrual cycle, degree of physical activity, improper collection and/or handling of the specimen, non-prescription drugs (aspirin, cold medications, vitamins, etc.), prescription drugs, alcohol intake and a number of non-illness-related factors. Any unusual or abnormal results should be discussed with your doctor. It is not possible to diagnose or treat any disease or problem with blood tests alone. It can, however, help you to learn more about your body and detect potential problems in early stages when treatment or changes in personal habits can be most effective.

Keep in mind that if you are undergoing treatment for renal disease, the ranges that your doctor may consider adequate for you may be different from the reference ranges that will be reported on your laboratory sheets. For instance, your BUN may be 30, and the Reference Range is listed as 7-18 mg/dL. Although this is “high” according to the Reference Range, it may well be within the bounds of “normal” as you are going through dialysis.

This review is a brief summary and is not intended to be comprehensive or replace discussion of your results with your health care team.

LIST OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE END STAGE RENAL DISEASE (ESRD) PATIENT

1. **Laboratory** - The Laboratory at Altru Hospital is available 24 hours a day. They can perform all the necessary lab tests with immediate lab reports as necessary. We also have Microbiology, Nuclear Medicine, and Blood Transfusion services available 24 hours a day.

2. **Pharmaceutical Services** - Patients may receive medication during their dialysis treatment, based on lab values.

   - **Aranesp** is an IV or subcutaneous medication used to help in the production of new red blood cells. This is a man made replacement hormone that the kidneys normally produce. The use of Aranesp may decrease the amount of blood transfusions normally needed.

   - **Zemplar** is an IV Vitamin D analog that works to lower parathroid hormone (PTH) levels. It is used to prevent and treat secondary hyperparathyroidism. High PTH levels are not good for your bones, red blood cells, heart, nerves or muscles.

   - **Venofer** is an IV form of Iron. Iron is important for the transport of oxygen in the blood. Venofer is used to treat people with kidney disease who have low iron levels.

Patients will receive prescriptions for home medications that they may have filled at the pharmacy of their choice.
3. **Transplantation Services** - Patients receive information regarding transplantation and are then referred to the center of their choice, i.e., Hennepin County, University of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic, Fargo Transplantation Program, etc.

4. **Dietary Services** - All patients will have a nutritional assessment done by the renal dietitian who will recommend appropriate nutritional therapy and will continually monitor and evaluate the patient. The dietitian is based in the Grand Forks dialysis unit and visits satellite units on a monthly basis. Further assistance is also available on an as needed basis.

5. **Radiology Services** - X-rays are available 24 hours a day at both Altru Hospital and the satellite units. Interventional Radiology services are available 24 hours a day for declotting accesses at Altru Hospital. Nuclear Medicine services are also available.

6. **Surgical Access Services** - Central venous catheters are inserted by a qualified doctor. A-V fistulas, grafts, and peritoneal dialysis catheters are performed in surgery by a qualified surgeon.

7. **Chaplaincy Services** - A priest or minister is available 24 hours a day.

8. **Emergency Services** - The Emergency Room is available to all patients needing those services on a 24 hours a day basis at Altru Hospital, Mercy, LifeCare, or RiverView Hospital.

9. **Financial Services** - Any patient needing financial counseling can obtain this through the Business Office at Altru Hospital.

10. **Social Services** - Any patient in the unit will be assessed by the Social Worker at the initiation of treatment and on a regular or as needed basis thereafter. These services are provided 24 hours a day.

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**COST**

On July 1, 1973, the Federal Government began providing Medicare benefits to end stage renal disease patients. Most people meet Medicare requirements, with benefits available after a short waiting period. Medicare coverage provides for a larger portion of the treatment expenses. Medicare's Part A hospital coverage provides virtually full coverage after a small deductible for any in-hospital expenses, including transplantation. The Part B medical or outpatient coverage provides 80% coverage (after small deductible) of chronic in-center or home dialysis treatment.

You may also have in insurance policy or be eligible for various state assistance programs which provide assistance for balances not covered by Medicare.

Because of continued changes in federal programming, there may be changes in your eligibility. It is advisable that you discuss these matters with our financial counselor. The contact person for this is at 701.780.5222. The financial advisor will be able to inform the patient of charges and services not covered upon request.
**TRAVEL**

Dialysis need not limit your business or vacation plans. Arrangements for dialysis while traveling can be made through your Renal Dialysis Unit. The unit has a listing of dialysis centers in the United States, as well as, throughout the world. Since scheduling and transferring of care plans and medical information, etc., is necessary, the unit would prefer to be contacted at least one month in advance. Occasionally, an emergency situation may arise where travel to another city is necessary on shorter notice. In this case, the unit will try to make the arrangements. In all cases, as much notice as possible is appreciated.

**WAYS TO HELP**

There is an increasing need at the Altru Health System Renal Dialysis and satellite units for gifts and grants to support renal programs and acquire new equipment. To help these needs, unrestricted gifts may be made. In addition, the donor may elect that a contribution be used for the purpose of his or her choice (i.e., direct patient needs, education, etc.).

Memorials and contributions are thoughtful and lasting gifts. Special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries or graduations may be appropriate times to make a donation.

All gifts are received with gratitude by Altru Health System. An acknowledgement of the gift will be sent in the name of the donor to the family of the deceased or to the honoree. The donor will also receive an acknowledgement stating that the gift was received. All contributions are tax deductible.

Gifts in the form of a check should be made payable to:

**Altru Health Foundation, P.O. Box 6002, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6002**

**HARP**

HARP, Help and Assistance for Renal Patients, provides protein supplements, travel, and lodging assistance. The HARP program was designed to decrease out patients’ out-of-pocket costs while still ensuring they receive the protein requirements they need. Protein supplements can be provided for a small fee under the HARP program. Travel and lodging assistance is intended to defray the financial burden of dialysis. Patients who qualify for travel and lodging assistance will need to meet the designated income guidelines. For more information or a HARP application, ask to speak with your dialysis social worker and/or dietitian.
Up to date information and education on kidney disease and dialysis is available at several trusted websites. The information does not replace advice given to you by your physician, but can be used to learn more about living well on dialysis and taking more responsibility for your care.

American Association of Kidney Patients
http://www.aakp.org/

Dialysis Patient Citizens
http://www.dialysispatients.org/

Kidney School
http://kidneyschool.org/

National Kidney Foundation
http://www.kidney.org/
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<th>Lab Value</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<td>WBC</td>
<td>3.6-11 K/UL</td>
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<td>Hgb</td>
<td>10-12 g/dl</td>
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<td>PLT</td>
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<td>Potassium</td>
<td>3.5-5.5 mEq/DL</td>
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<td>Calcium</td>
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<td>Phosphorous</td>
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<td>Alk Phosphatase</td>
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<td>Albumin</td>
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<td>PTH</td>
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**OTHER TESTS**

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<td>Pre/Post Bun</td>
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<td>URR</td>
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<td>KT/V</td>
<td>$&gt;1.2$ non-diabetic</td>
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<td>$&gt;1.4$ diabetic</td>
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<td>$&gt;1.7$ PD patient</td>
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**Iron Studies**

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<td>Iron</td>
<td>40-145 ug/DL</td>
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<td>TIBC</td>
<td>260-445 ug/DL</td>
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<td>Iron Saturation</td>
<td>$&gt;20%$</td>
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<td>Ferritin</td>
<td>$&lt;800$ ng/ml</td>
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# My Important Medication Information

Use this chart to keep track of your medications. Be sure to take this chart with you whenever you visit your healthcare professional in case there are changes in your medicines.

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<th>MEDICATION</th>
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