



CDC CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Tips for Dialysis Patients to Prevent Antibiotic Resistance

Bacteria that develop resistance to antibiotics can be harmful to you. By preventing infections in general, you keep yourself healthy and decrease your need for antibiotics. This will decrease the chance that you will get an infection that is antibiotic-resistant. Be involved and take an active role in decisions about your care. Patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results.

- Ask your doctor if you need to be vaccinated against diseases that cause respiratory infections such as influenza and pneumonia. Preventing lung infections and their complications decreases antibiotic use.
- If you must stay in a hospital, ask about the facility's infection control program. Also ask what can be done to help reduce the risk of infection. Let doctors and nurses know that you care about preventing infections.
- Since you are part of your healthcare team, do not be afraid to remind doctors or nurses to clean their hands. This includes washing their hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based handrub before working with you.
- Wash your hands carefully after handling any type of soiled material or body fluids. Also, wash your hands before you change your dressing or manipulate a central venous catheter. Remember to wash your hands after you have gone to the bathroom.
- Use proper personal hygiene, such as bathing the night before dialysis and/or the day of dialysis. Follow the unit policy on cleaning instructions for your access carefully before every cannulation. If you are diabetic, maintain regular foot checks.
- Be sure your healthcare providers are aware of all medications you currently take. This includes both prescription and over-the-counter medications. Doing this may prevent a medication interaction, which may cause one or more of your medications not to work. Ask if there are special instructions for your medication before and after dialysis.
- Ask your healthcare provider or the pharmacist for the names of each medication being given to you and the reasons you are taking them. By asking questions, you may prevent errors.
- Ask your doctor or nurse if and when you should wear gloves, gowns, and masks. For example, you may need to wear gloves when changing your catheter dressings.



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- Intravenous catheters and drainage tubes are all entry points for germs. Discuss with your doctor the proper care involved and when they can be safely removed. Keep the skin around the dressing clean and dry.
- Your dressing may become loose or wet, or your catheter or drainage tube may become loose or dislodged. Know how to take care of the situation and when to seek medical treatment.
- Pay attention to symptoms that may indicate an infection: unexpected pain, chills, fever, drainage, or increased inflammation of a surgical wound or catheter site. Contact your doctor if any of these occur.
- Keep in mind that antibiotics are used to treat bacterial, not viral, infections. A viral illness, such as a cold, will not respond to antibiotic therapy. Asking for antibiotics when they are not needed may actually harm your health.
- If your doctor orders antibiotics to treat an infection, take the full course of antibiotics as prescribed. Do not stop taking the antibiotic when you begin to feel better. Do not save antibiotics for later use “just in case of another infection.”

For More Information

www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/healthcare

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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