



Kidney Dialysis: A Lifesaver!

By Tina Clarkson

Several of our transportation providers transport our members to local dialysis centers. Let's learn more about dialysis so we will have a better understanding of the special needs of these individuals. They need some extra care and attention to their comfort, and a safe, timely ride home! Our members visit dialysis centers usually three days per week, every week. The patient first receives a checkup, and then settles into one of the recliners circling the room. Propping up an arm, a technician slips two needles into blood vessels near the patient's wrist. The needles—one to capture the blood and the other to return it—are attached to plastic tubes leading to a dialysis machine beside the chair.

For the next three hours, this device, which looks like a tall, narrow, automated teller machine, removes wastes and extra fluid from the patient's blood. The patient passes the hours by reading, watching the evening news, and sometimes dozing. For these patients, dialysis keeps them alive.

Our members are of the approximately 217,000 Americans who receive ongoing dialysis, at an annual cost of \$11.1 billion nationwide. Since the late 1960s, the procedure has been used in place of kidneys lost to disease, birth defects, or injury. It can be used temporarily until the kidneys resume function or the patient receives a transplant, or for years at a time if the first two options are not available.

What does dialysis do?

Like healthy kidneys, dialysis keeps your body in balance. Dialysis does the following:

- removes waste, salt and extra water to prevent them from building up in the body
- keeps a safe level of certain chemicals in your blood, such as potassium, sodium and bicarbonate
- helps to control blood pressure

You need dialysis when you develop end stage kidney failure -- usually by that time you lose about 85 to 90 percent of your kidney function. Patients usually feel nauseated or very tired after a dialysis treatment. Feeling like this after dialysis makes a person not want to have another dialysis treatment. If a person starts skipping dialysis, it can be even more dangerous and he or she will become sicker.

Transportation Provider Tips of the Trade

Rising fuel costs affect most of us in one way or another. When transportation is your business, the cost of fuel becomes even more important. GasBuddy.com offers these top ten tips for saving fuel.

1. [Avoid high speeds](#)
2. [Do not accelerate or brake hard](#)
3. [Keep tires properly inflated](#)
4. [Use air conditioning sparingly](#)
5. [Keep windows clean](#)
6. [Service vehicle regularly](#)
7. [Use cruise control](#)
8. [Avoid long idles](#)
9. [Avoid heavy loads](#)
10. [Purchase a fuel efficient vehicle](#)

Keeping these things in mind will help turn pennies into dollars over the long haul.

