

Patient Education

# Your Healthcare Team

You are the most important member of the healthcare team! You can take an active role in your care by learning all you can and cooperating fully with your treatment plan. You and your family should not be afraid to ask questions. Each person on the health care team is here to help you feel your best.

Management of chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a team effort. Working with you will be your doctor, who will prescribe medications and manage your medical problems, as well as other professionals who may participate in educating you about your condition.

Members of your CKD team include:

- You
- Your primary care physician
- Your nephrologist
- Your nurse, hemodialysis technician, social worker, and dietician



## Primary Care Physician

Your primary care doctor is an important team member you already know. Your doctor may be a general practitioner, an internist, or a family practice doctor. Your primary care doctor takes care of your general health and may continue to treat your specific conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart problems, and other medical concerns. He or she may have been who diagnosed your kidney disease.

It is important that you keep your regularly scheduled visits with your family doctor and communicate any changes in your treatment plan, even when you begin to see your nephrologist.

## **Nephrologist (kidney specialist doctor)**

Your nephrologist is a doctor who has special training on how to treat kidney disease. Your nephrologist will work with you and the rest of the healthcare team. A plan to treat your disease and manage your health will be developed based on your symptoms, special tests and lab reports.

You will see your nephrologist on a regular basis. Your nephrologist will monitor your health. He or she will make changes to your health care plan as needed to help you stay healthy.

## **Nurse**

The experienced registered nurse (RN), licensed professional nurse (LPN), or advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) is trained to care for patients with chronic kidney disease. The nurse will review your lab results with you, monitor your vital signs and complete an assessment at each visit.

He or she will provide you with the education and information you will need to take care of yourself so that you can make the best choices for your treatment plan. Your nurse is an excellent person to answer questions about CKD and daily care. Your nurse works closely with your hemodialysis technicians in your clinic.

You may find it helpful to have a notebook where you write down questions for your healthcare provider. If you're like most people, you have questions that you think of at home and then when you see your doctor, it's hard to remember those questions. A notebook that you carry with you can be a good way to make sure your questions are answered.

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