

Quality Insights

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORKS

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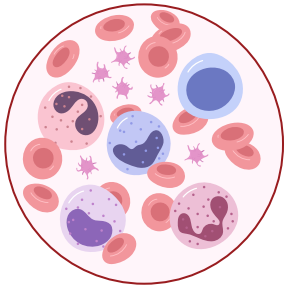
Why Am I Cold?

Reasons why you may feel cold and ways to keep warm while on dialysis.

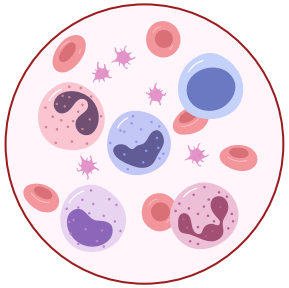
Do you feel cold during dialysis?

If so, you are not alone.

Did you know that most kidney patients have anemia? Anemia occurs when your body cannot make enough red blood cells. Red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen through your body. Healthy kidneys produce a hormone called erythropoietin, or EPO, that helps in the production of red blood cells. When your kidneys are damaged, the production of this hormone slows or stops. This can lead to a low red blood cell count in your body. When you have a low red blood cell count, or anemia, feeling cold is a very common side effect.



Normal Amount of Red Blood Cells



Anemic Amount of Red Blood Cells

Feeling cold during your dialysis treatment is very uncomfortable. Here are some things you can try to keep warm:

- Wear warm clothing.
- Bring a blanket to treatment.
- Wear a hat, warm socks, and/or gloves during treatment. Keeping your head, hands, and feet warm will help to keep the rest of your body warm.

Remember, for safety reasons, you must always keep your vascular access site (fistula, graft, or catheter) visible to staff. Consider making small alterations to a few items of clothing that will allow you to stay warm and safe during treatment.

- Cut a hole in the sleeve of your sweater so you arm is warm and your access site is visible.
- Purchase clothing items that are designed for dialysis patients, to keep your access site exposed. There are several options available on the Internet.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that dialysis facilities maintain a temperature that is comfortable to the majority of patients. Although a specific temperature is not required by CMS, the community standard ranges anywhere between 72 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

- If you feel that the air conditioning is too cold you may request a chair that is not under an air conditioning vent. Please note your unit will do their best to meet this request, but changing your chair is never guaranteed.
- It is possible that only certain staff members are allowed to make changes to the temperature in your unit. Please be patient. If changes to the temperature need to be made, they will be made as soon as staff are able.
- Talk to your treatment team about other modalities, like home hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis. This would allow you to dialyze in the comfort of your own home and give you full control over your treatment environment.

If you are having chills please notify your treatment staff right away so they can evaluate you for a possible infection.

Providing a comfortable treatment environment is a high priority. Your dialysis treatment staff is committed to providing you with the best care possible in a manner that is safe and within the guidelines of the Federal regulations.

