



20 June 2025

Deputy Joe Cooney, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 32606/25

To ask the Minister for Health to provide details of the training provided to haemodialysis patients to carry out their own haemodialysis at home; whether self-administered homecare is best international practice

Dear Deputy Cooney,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Renal Office (NRO) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Haemodialysis is a treatment for End Stage Kidney Disease whereby a patient's blood passes through a device that removes the toxins and fluids that accumulate with kidney failure. This is usually undertaken in a large dialysis unit, typically with three treatment sessions per week.

The term 'home haemodialysis' is when a patient's haemodialysis treatment takes place in a patient's own home rather than in a hospital or free standing dialysis unit setting. It allows the patient the option to administer their own treatment with the flexibility to suit their schedule. It also allows for a more frequent use of dialysis than the typical in-centre haemodialysis schedule, resulting in better overall toxin control.

Patient set up and use of a dialysis machine in their own home is subject to certain criteria. The patient's clinical renal team discuss this with the patient and determine if they are potentially suitable. Unfortunately many patients with kidney failure are not appropriate candidates for home haemodialysis.

Dialysis therapy in the home may also be administered using a different technique, peritoneal dialysis, that doesn't require the transit of blood outside of the body. Some patients who are not suitable for or who do not tolerate home haemodialysis, may manage peritoneal dialysis, and vice versa. The training for both peritoneal dialysis and home haemodialysis dialysis is structurally similar but differs in its content.

In line with International standards, a patient who is interested in and who is clinically suitable for home haemodialysis, will usually commence dialysis in the hospital or free standing dialysis unit. Once they are safely established on this form of therapy, they commence training in home haemodialysis which is provided by dedicated home therapies staff.

Training with home haemodialysis typically takes 4-6 weeks depending on the patient. Each training schedule is tailored to best suit the patient needs. The staff support the patient through their entire dialysis journey. The staff explain what is involved in terms of training and setting up a machine. The nurses provide one-to-one training and organise the installation of the dialysis equipment and consumables free of charge to the patient. The patient receives training, educational aids and ongoing support based on individualised needs. The patient as well as family members, as or if required, will receive full training prior to starting on home haemodialysis.

Beyond the in person training, user friendly technology and digital education experience provides the patient with a full understanding of kidney disease and the home dialysis process. Lessons cover important safety aspects like how to keep your access and equipment clean, keeping good records and



trouble shooting in case of an emergency. Specific home therapies nurses support and follow up with the patient, including undertaking home visits, as required.

Multiple studies have demonstrated advantages of home haemodialysis over in-centre haemodialysis, when used appropriately in suitable individuals. As such it is considered best clinical practice for appropriate patients both nationally and internationally.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager