

AT HOME

Volume 2 No. 1
May 2009

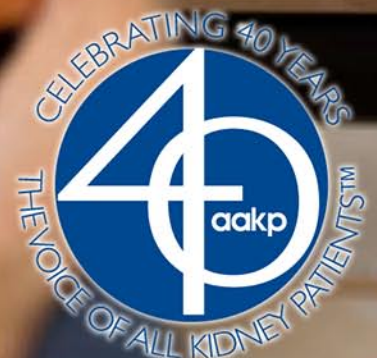
with aakp

A Short, Daily Journey on a Fast Machine

The Pressure Is On!

Home Dialysis
Storage Options

Cooking for
Dialysis at Home



A Publication of the American Association of Kidney Patients

A Short, Daily Journey on a Fast Machine

By David Rosenbloom



five days before the transplant was scheduled.

After the last near-transplant had missed, in September 2005, I decided to take matters fully into my own hands and demanded I be trained for home hemodialysis (HHD). I could no longer abide by the clinical atmosphere and have thrice-weekly-treatments ruling my entire existence. I felt I was in prison with no chance of parole. It was time for a change and my doctors and dialysis center staff were willing to help.

David Rosenbloom dialyzes at home with his cat.

What makes life worth living? For me, an energetic, self-employed 62-year-old, left-handed woodworker, it's being able to get up in the morning, fully refreshed, and go into my shop to create fine furniture – day after day. Two years ago I couldn't do that. I could barely work three short days a week. Most of my time seemed taken by long dialysis sessions in a clinic followed by afternoons napping because I was so drained. I seemed to always be playing catch up on days when I didn't have dialysis. I had to turn down furniture commissions. My life was on permanent "hold."

I was diagnosed in May 2002 with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and immediately started dialysis. I had a number of offers of a kidney from dear friends, and two actually went through all the pre-surgery testing. Both were rejected for medical reasons, the last only

Within three months I had a full dialysis setup operating at home, on my schedule, and was dialyzing every other day for 3.5 hours a treatment, using a conventional dialysis machine. Treatment prescriptions (number and length of treatment) vary for each patient and is determined by a patient's doctor. With the gracious and loving help of my wife, Linda, as my partner, I dialyzed in the evenings after dinner. I became adept at operating and diagnosing problems with the dialysis machine. And cannulating (putting the dialysis needles in my access) became a piece of cake – simple and virtually painless.

More importantly, the results were immediate and amazing. The extra treatment a week made a world of difference in my health. I gained strength and stamina and could now work more days for longer periods. I began to golf and swim again and generally felt much better. And

Cover Story, continued on next page

I had my freedom once more. I was no longer at the mercy of the clinic's schedule. I was in a safe, comfortable place – my home!

This treatment regimen continued for eight months, until I heard about the NxStage® System One, a self-contained, portable hemodialysis machine that weighs about 70 pounds and is the size of a computer monitor.

I was trained on the new machine in just five days at DaVita at Home® at UCLA by a team of nurses headed by Michelle Rice. NxStage reports the average training time for their system is three weeks, but due to my prior HHD experience (and a great training team!), my training was shorter. I have done HHD six days a week with the NxStage system for over a year now. Each session is about the length of a feature movie: 2.5 hours.

This time the results were phenomenal! I no longer have any down periods and am much stronger. I've reduced my blood pressure medication, opened my diet markedly and have not felt this good in many years. I have traveled cross-country with the machine by car and plane, and generally amaze anyone who comes into contact with me when they learn I am on dialysis.

My home hemodialysis machine is easy to set up and user friendly. A technical advisor is always available over the phone should I have any questions, and the operator's manual is written in simple terms.

I look at this process like a diabetic who has to take insulin shots several times a day. It becomes routine. And the payoff of better health is immeasurable! The long and short of all this is to let you know life doesn't end with dialysis. People with cystic kidneys or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) need to know there are alternate treatment modalities

(peritoneal dialysis or PD, home hemodialysis, nocturnal hemodialysis) available to them and new technologies are now under development which may provide even greater freedom and health benefits.

Daily dialysis is not a cure. I still want that elusive transplant and, after five and a half years on the UNOS (United Network for Organ Sharing) list, hopefully my chances are improving. Short of a successful transplant, I feel this is the next best option. I largely have my independence again and the disease no longer controls my daily life.

If you want more information about home dialysis options, check out the AAKP Web site, www.aakp.org/newsletters/Home-Magazine. Then talk to your doctor and nurses. Retirement is a long way off for me! **AH**

David Rosenbloom is a home hemodialysis patient from Eagle Rock, Cal.

