

NephroPlus filters out myths from the facts associated with life on dialysis

NephroPlus, a leading dialysis network and a trailblazer in redefining dialysis care in India, has filtered six critical myths surrounding life on dialysis and reveals how life on dialysis is not a death sentence.

Chronic Kidney Disease is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. A recent WHO study reveals that chronic kidney disease is among the top 10 causes of death globally¹. Other studies also show that over 1,000,000 new patients are diagnosed with end-stage kidney diseases per year. The number of patients attributable to chronic Dialysis is 1.75 lakhs, with 129 per million population².

Kidney failure is no one's fault. It can strike anyone at any age; men, women, and children. Over 2 million people worldwide currently receive treatment with dialysis or a kidney transplant to stay alive, yet this number may only represent 10% of people who need treatment to live.

Living on Dialysis can be challenging. But it's important to remember that Dialysis treatment performs the life-saving job of filtering the body's toxins that their kidneys can no longer do. People receiving this therapy can continue with their lives normally, yet there are many myths about the treatment and what it does to your life.

Many issues demand your attention as you develop a 'New Normal' in your life. Let's understand how to filter myths from the facts

- **First Myth:** Dialysis is a death sentence.
Fact: No, Dialysis is not a death sentence. It is a second chance to live your life without suffering from the consequences of failed kidneys. People live on dialysis for decades.
- **Second Myth:** Dialysis is uncommon
Fact: The number of Indians suffering from chronic kidney ailments has doubled in the past 15 years, and at present, 17 in every hundred citizens suffer from some form of kidney disease, as reported by health experts. The number of patients undergoing Dialysis in India is also increasing by 10-15% every year, which majorly includes children. However, not much importance is given to kidney disorders as it is still an under-the-radar condition.
- **Third Myth:** You can't travel if you are on Dialysis
Fact: Many feel it is necessary to limit travel, either locally or for a vacation. It can be hard to take spontaneous trips and spend extended time away from home; however, a little bit of homework on your side to find a reliable dialysis center in your place of travel can solve your problem and will allow you to travel and enjoy without being worried about your dialysis needs
- **Fourth Myth:** You can't eat normal food if you are on Dialysis
Fact: A carefully thought-out meal plan will play a significant role. Your dietitian can help you figure out how to incorporate foods you enjoy and still stay within your dialysis diet guidelines. While some of the key basics to follow are; less salt intake, controlled potassium and phosphorus food, more proteins, and controlled fluids. Talk to your doctor or dietitian to create a kidney-friendly meal plan so you can thrive

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death>

² <https://kidney360.asnjournals.org/content/1/10/1143>

- **Fifth Myth:** Coping with life on Dialysis is impossible

Fact: Almost everyone gets past their initial fears of being on Dialysis. Yes, it changes your life drastically, but it can be managed. Becoming more knowledgeable and knowing what to expect often helps a person to cope better. Information is the best way to overcome the fears of dialysis treatment. Talking to mental health professionals and people already on Dialysis helps tremendously, don't be afraid to seek help. Once you have adjusted to the treatment, you can work around it and begin to enjoy life to the fullest.

- **Sixth Myth:** You cannot play a sport or exercise while on Dialysis

Fact: The truth is that most dialysis patients can exercise. Exercise keeps your body strong and healthy. Regular exercise is the first activity that helps many people on Dialysis feel "normal" again. This is partly because exercise can help you return to the activities you enjoyed before Dialysis. You can choose continuous activities such as walking, swimming, bicycling (indoors or out), skiing, aerobic dancing, or any other activity in which you need to move large muscle groups continuously. Be sure to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

Regardless of what brought you to the point of kidney failure and the need for Dialysis, it would be best if you manage your physical health regularly. Staying healthy and strong will help you cope with the stress of Dialysis. Follow a nutritious diet, exercise, and monitor your blood pressure and blood values to stay healthy.

*A successful survivor who has been writing this article is on long-term Dialysis for more than 20 years, **Mr. Kamal Shah**. He is the Co-founder of NephroPlus, an Indian chain of dialysis centers.*