

The Role of the Home Hemodialysis Nurse

The role of the home hemodialysis (HHD) nurse provides a unique opportunity to be an autonomous, innovative, and resourceful professional. The most consistent member of the health care team who is involved with the HHD patient is the nurse. The relationship that develops is crucial for the wellbeing of the patient and family and the success of HHD for the patient.

As a responsible professional, the HHD nurse is pivotal in coordinating a consistent and clear plan of care for the patient. Using professional competency and communication skills, the HHD nurse must establish trusting relationship with the patient, family, and the entire health care team.

The HHD nurse functions in several capacities:

- Provides education
- Coordinates clinical care
- Leads the health care team
- Is a member of the interdisciplinary team
- Serves as a patient advocate
- Incorporates the patient's need for relationships and sexual identity in plan of care

The HHD patient needs to know:

- Short- and long-term complications of uremia
- Understanding and recognition of:
 - Machine alarms
 - Access infection and flow issues
 - Fluid balance
- Home emergency machine procedures
- Aseptic technique in the home
- Disinfection in the home
- Labs: processing, equipment required, shipping of labs
- Central venous catheter (CVC) and/or fistula/vascular access care
- Self-monitoring of vital signs, blood pressure, and weight
- Maintaining home dialysis records
- Monthly clinic visits
- Current medications, procedures, and techniques
- Individual activity and exercise regimen
- Renal dietician role for nutritional needs assessment and modification
- Renal social worker role for social and emotional needs assessment

- Monitoring and inventory of supplies
- Epoetin alfa self-administration, proper care, storage, and documentation of administration
- Technical aspects of the hemodialysis machine functioning, set up, take down and troubleshooting
- Water and culture sampling

Potential candidates for HHD can include, but are not limited to, patients who:

- Choose HHD
- Desire self-care and independence
- Desire self-scheduling for employment, travel, or flexibility
- Have cardiovascular disease
- Have diabetes mellitus
- Are transplant candidates

Compiled by ANNA's Home Therapies Specialty Practice Network ~ 8/15