

Coping with Cold Weather and Winter Storms

Cold weather and winter storms can be dangerous, especially for people on dialysis. This guide will help you prepare for storms and stay safe and healthy during cold winter weather.



What to expect:

- Trouble getting to dialysis
- Delays in transportation, supply deliveries or getting medications
- Higher chance of slipping and falling
- Higher chance of getting sick with colds and breathing problems.
- The power might go out, making it hard to get food and water. Talking and sharing information might be harder, so it's a good idea to have backup plans ready.

Reminders:

- Hemodialysis centers may have to adjust your regularly scheduled dialysis treatments.
- Keep in contact with your dialysis unit and be prepared to come in at any time.
- You will need to make additional travel arrangements.
- Ensure that your contact information is up to date with your dialysis unit.

Risks for People with Kidney Disease:

Staying warm is very important to help you stay healthy. Wear light layers to trap heat better. When you can, choose wool and other natural materials to help your body stay at the right temperature. At home, try to keep the room you use the warmest. When it's cold outside, stay safe and watch out for the risks below:

- **Dehydration:** Even though this might seem like a summer issue, dehydration can also happen in cold weather.
- **Worsening Itchy Skin:** Cold air can dry out your skin and make it more itchy
- **Potential for Increased Blood Pressure:** Cold weather can cause blood pressure to rise. For those on dialysis, this can increase the risk of strokes and heart attacks.
- **Power Loss During Home Dialysis:** If you do home dialysis, you need to be ready for delivery delays and power outages. Check the weather forecasts; if a snowstorm is coming, start your treatment earlier just in case there are power interruptions.
- **Snow and ice can make it harder to travel.** You should plan for extra travel time to get to treatments. Always try to keep at least 72 hours' (about 3 days) worth of supplies on hand, and if possible, keep up to two weeks' worth.
- **Home Dialysis Patients:** There may be delays in getting home dialysis supplies and medications delivered due to the weather. Always try to have at least two weeks or more of your supplies on hand.

Quick Tips



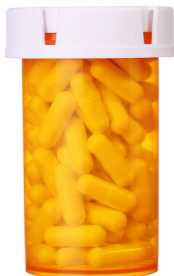
- If you drive yourself to dialysis, prepare a winter kit for your car in case you get stuck and can't keep it running.



- Stay hydrated with warm drinks and soups. Remember that soup and sauces count as fluids!



- Protect your fistula or catheter access from the cold.



- Keep extra medication for emergencies in case you can't reach a pharmacy.



- Stay in contact with your dialysis unit.



- Be prepared for a change of dialysis schedule.

Talk to your kidney team if you have questions or need more information.