

## Patient information

### Haemodialysis

#### Critical Care Department - Royal Liverpool Hospital

Sometimes when a person is critically ill, their condition can affect the way their kidneys work. The kidneys can either stop working completely and the patient stops passing urine or the patient can still be passing urine but the quality of the urine is poor.

The kidneys are very important organs in the body as they clean a person's blood and remove poisons from the body. You cannot live without the function of your kidneys and therefore it is important, if necessary, that we help your kidneys to work.

When this happens the doctors on the Critical Care Unit (CCU) may decide to perform a procedure called Haemodialysis (Dialysis). Haemodialysis is a process that replaces normal kidney function.

It is used when a person's kidneys have failed or have started to fail. haemodialysis can take place on the CCU. The patient does not have to be moved to another department. A machine called a haemodialysis machine is used.

Before haemodialysis takes place, a drip has to be inserted into the patient's neck or groin. This is how the patient will be attached to the Haemodialysis machine. The haemodialysis machine will be placed next to the patient's bed. It will be attached to two fluid pipes that connect to taps on the Unit's walls. The machine has many plastic tubes that are attached to it which will carry the patient's blood around the machine. These are disposable tubes that are used only once then thrown away.

At any one time there is only about one pint of blood going round (circulating) the machine. The machine cleans the patient's blood and returns it to the patient. The whole process usually takes four to six hours.

Haemodialysis may take place every day or every two days and so on. Blood tests are taken from the patient every day and the results of them help the doctors to decide how often haemodialysis will take place.

The nurse looking after the patient is trained in haemodialysis and is aware of the various risks that are involved with haemodialysis and is ready to treat them. The patient is also monitored at all times.

## **Are there any risks?**

### **The risks involved in haemodialysis are:**

1. Drop in blood pressure.
2. Change in heart rhythm.
3. Poor drip position, not allowing the machine remove blood properly.
4. Patient may need more oxygen.
5. If the patient is awake, they may feel dizzy, have a headache, feel lethargic or start twitching.

If your relative is receiving haemodialysis then it is because it is necessary for their condition to improve.

Some patients may only need haemodialysis for a short period of time and then their kidneys start working again. In other cases the patient may go on to require future haemodialysis once they have left Critical Care.

As with all treatment on the CCU, regular updates and changes of treatment will be discussed with you and the patient, if they are awake. The nurse at the bedside is always happy to discuss any questions you might have and the doctors are available to speak to you also.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further Information**

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