



American Association of  
Kidney Patients

The Independent Voice of Kidney Patients Since 1969™

## There's No Place Like Home

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Many kidney patients across the United States are not made aware that there are options for them when it comes to dialysis treatments. Most of them think that “in-center” dialysis is their only option. This is not true. In today’s world of technology, it is now possible for kidney patients to do their dialysis at home. Most patients with kidney failure undergo a demanding dialysis regimen of in-center dialysis, three days per week for three to four hour therapy sessions. That type of schedule may leave the patient feeling washed out and very tired, not to mention the hassles and expenses of traveling back and forth to the dialysis center.

There is almost no other medical condition that requires such an enormous life style change as dialysis. However, home hemodialysis allows patients to dialyze in the comfort of their own home on a daily basis. Home hemodialysis is an option for patients to help maintain their lifestyle and a greater sense of normalcy as well as a better quality of life.

Meet Paul Duker, 70, and his wife, Suzi of Quincy, IL. Paul has no kidneys. Paul and Suzi are members of the Kidney Patients Support Group of Quincy, IL & Hannibal, MO. He lost his first kidney in 1989 due to arterial stenosis, and in 2011, he lost his other kidney to cancer. Paul says he is a victim of Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam and has multiple health issues. Paul has been on dialysis for 15 months and home hemodialysis for 13 months. His wife, Suzi, is his care partner. They do dialysis five days a week, and never take two days off in a row. Treatment takes 3 ½ hours from start to finish. This includes set up time. Together they were trained to set up the dialysis machine and perform the therapy. They chose this particular modality of doing dialysis because of its

convenience and effectiveness. Of the choices they had to keep Paul alive, home hemodialysis seemed to be the best choice for them.

The Dukers say, “Doing dialysis at home gives us the flexibility to arrange the treatments around our own schedule, and independence from an in-center schedule. We have a portable dialysis machine and it fits nicely on an end-table.” It is not always necessary to have a care partner to do home hemodialysis, but it does seem to help the Dukers to share the responsibility, not only physically, but emotionally also. Additionally, it makes time seem to go by faster!

### **Home hemodialysis offers:**

- Ease, comfort and convenience
- Improved patient outcomes
- More time to do what you like
- Reduction of travel expenses
- Improved understanding of End Stage Renal Disease
- Can do treatment during the night while you sleep
- Improved quality of life

Home hemodialysis has been successfully used by thousands of patients nation-wide. It is a safe, effective and efficient modality that allows patients the ability to do their therapy on a schedule that works for them and their lifestyle. It allows for fluctuation of therapy frequency, i.e. increasing the frequency of dialysis, which quite often provides a potential survival benefit.

*Lana Schmidt is Co-Leader of the Kidney Patients Support Group of Quincy, IL & Hannibal, MO. She has been a kidney dialysis patient for 10 years. Patty Purcell is a home hemodialysis personal assistant.*

**For a listing of support groups in your community or to start your own support group, visit [www.aakp.org/community/supportgroups.html](http://www.aakp.org/community/supportgroups.html). There you'll find a listing of renal support groups, the capability to list your support group, and you can download the AAKP Support Group Guide which provides step by step instructions on how to start your own support group.**

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