Welcome to the
Vancouver General Hospital
Independent Dialysis Unit (IDU)

Hours of Operation:
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Independent Dialysis Unit
Vancouver General Hospital
Jim Pattison Pavilion, Level 1
899 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
Tel: 604-875-4183
**Introduction**

This pamphlet provides information about the IDU and helps prepare you for your dialysis treatment and training.

**The Independent Dialysis Unit (IDU)**

- Is home to 3 independent dialysis programs:
  - Peritoneal Dialysis
  - Home Hemodialysis
  - Nocturnal In-unit Hemodialysis
- We provide treatment and training for people on dialysis at home or overnight at the IDU.

Note: the hospital is Fragrance Free. Please do not wear perfume, cologne or aftershave while you are in the IDU or in other areas of the hospital.

**How do I get to the IDU?**

You and your family are responsible for arranging your transportation to and from the IDU. There are a few options for transportation and parking during your treatment and training.

Note: For peritoneal dialysis, do not drive yourself to the IDU on the day of your peritoneal catheter insertion. You will need to be accompanied by someone to help you get home.

**Parking Pass**

If you, or your family, will be driving to the IDU regularly, you may be eligible for a VGH monthly parking pass to park in designated disabled parking stalls at a reduced rate. To be eligible for this program, you must have a valid disabled parking permit (with blue and white wheelchair symbol) issued by SPARC BC.

**For peritoneal dialysis** - this pass will only be valid for approximately one month while you start your dialysis and complete your training.

**For home hemodialysis training** - this pass will only be valid during your training period and your dialysis schedule will be written on the pass.
If you think you are eligible for the VGH monthly pass speak to your social worker.

You must display the valid SPARC BC disabled parking permit and the VGH monthly pass on the dashboard. You must also pay for the first 30 minutes of parking. Otherwise you may receive a parking ticket and a fine of up to $50 which is your responsibility to pay.

Disabled parking stalls are located on the ground level of the VGH 12th Avenue Jim Pattison Pavilion Main Entrance. The elevator at the main entrance can take you there (press LG). Please note that the parking spaces are first come, first served. They are not reserved for dialysis patients.

**HandyDART**

This is a door-to-door public transit service that uses specially equipped buses to carry passengers who are unable to use the bus system.

If you are already using HandyDART, you will want to phone the HandyDART office to make new arrangements for your pre-training and training sessions. Please phone HandyDART as soon as you know your schedule as it can take up to one week to process these changes.

If you would like to start this service, speak to your social worker who will help you register. The registration may take up to one week to process, so you may need to make arrangements for the first week at the IDU. After you are registered, you or your family are responsible for booking HandyDART rides for dialysis training and other appointments.

If you have any questions about transportation or parking, please contact your social worker.
When should I come?

- You will be contacted regarding when to come to the IDU. On your first visit you will be given a schedule with times and days of the week for your dialysis and training.

What should I do when I arrive at the IDU?

- Check in with the Nursing Unit Assistant (Unit Clerk) at the front desk.
- Stay in the waiting area until your nurse comes to greet you.

Are family and visitors allowed in the IDU?

- Yes, during the day you are welcome to bring a family member or a friend for support.
- Your family member or friend may be asked to leave the dialysis unit at any time if there is a medical emergency.
- Children (under the age of 12) must be with another visiting adult. They cannot stay alone with you.

What can I do during dialysis?

There may be time during your training for relaxation. You can:

- Watch television (TV)
- Read/Study
- Sleep
- Write letters
- Listen to music with earphones
- Work on your own computer (including playing video games) but there is no Internet connection available.

Can I eat during dialysis?

- Yes, you are welcome to bring your own food. A light lunch and snacks are recommended.
- Please eat a light meal before you arrive.
What about my medications?

- It is important to keep a current record of all your medications (prescription, non-prescription and herbal supplements) in your dialysis chart.

- **Bring all your medications for the pharmacist to review during your training week and to all clinic visits.** For medications that need to be kept refrigerated, it is okay to bring an empty box that shows the name and strength of the medication.

- Bring any non-prescription medications or herbal products you are using.

- If you are diabetic, bring your blood glucose logbook or glucometer machine for review by the kidney doctor and/or pharmacist.

- The British Columbia Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA) will pay for any prescription medications that are related to your kidney disease (e.g. Renavite, Calcium, Aspirin).

- Your kidney medication orders will be faxed to a community pharmacy that works with dialysis patients and the medications will be delivered to you.

- You need to call the dialysis community pharmacy to reorder the medication **before** your medication runs out.

- You may be prescribed medications that are not related to your dialysis. These medications are not covered by BCPRA but may be covered by Pharmacare. The dialysis community pharmacy can fill these medications for you but you may have to pay for them. Alternatively, you may get a prescription from the doctor to take to a pharmacy of your choice.

- If another doctor orders a medication for you, or if you start using an over-the-counter medication or herbal product, please bring them to your next visit.
**Will I still see my regular Nephrologist?**

- You no longer need to see your regular Nephrologist. The IDU Nephrologists will now provide all your kidney and dialysis related care.

**Will I still see the Kidney Clinic team?**

- No. You will now be followed by the IDU team

**Should I still see my family doctor, specialists and dentist?**

- Yes, it is important that you continue to see your family doctor for regular check ups and other non-kidney related concerns.

- If you are seeing any other specialists continue to do so.

- There are no dental services at VGH so make sure you continue to see your dentist.
Your IDU Team

Nursing Unit Assistant (Unit Clerk)
The Nursing Unit Assistant updates the information on your chart. They also assist you in arranging tests and appointments.

Nurse
Your nurse works with you to provide your dialysis care, education, and training to help you do your dialysis independently and confidently in a safe manner.

Nephrologist (Kidney Doctor)
The Nephrologists look after your dialysis and dialysis related medical care. They order necessary blood work and investigations and continue to communicate with your family doctor and other specialists about your health and dialysis. You will be seen by several Nephrologists that specialize in home dialysis.

Nephrology Fellow
This is a medical doctor in training in the area of nephrology (kidney medicine, dialysis and transplant). VGH is a teaching hospital; therefore you may be seen by a Nephrology Fellow who is under the supervision of the attending Nephrologist.

Dietitian
Your renal dietitian regularly assesses your nutrition needs and provides education and information to help you make healthy food choices.

Pharmacist
Your pharmacist reviews your medications, makes sure you know how to take your medications and communicates any issues with your community pharmacy where you fill your medications.

Social Worker
Your renal social worker helps you with emotional and practical concerns related to your health including:
- Individual/family counseling and support to help you cope with your situation
- Information about community resources such as - home support services, financial aid programs, employment/ retraining, housing, etc.

Patient Care Coordinator (PCC)
The Patient Care Coordinator provides leadership for staff and coordinates patient care activities within the IDU.