



How Dry weight and fluid gain affect dialysis patients

What is dry weight?

Dry weight is your weight without the excess fluid that builds up between dialysis treatments. It is the lowest weight you can safely reach after dialysis without developing low blood pressure and cramps, which occur when too much fluid is removed. Your dry weight is the target weight where you feel comfortable and not thirsty

How is dry weight determined?

Your doctor will determine your dry weight depending on the following:

- How close you are to a normal blood pressure
- Absence of edema and swelling
- Neck veins that are not extended
- Absence of lung sounds related to fluid overload
- No shortness of breath or congestive heart failure
- A normal size heart shadow on X-rays
- The amount of urine you are still passing

Dry weight should be assessed at least every 2 weeks and adjusted as you lose or gain weight

Why do I gain fluid between dialysis sessions?

You have a decreased urine flow so all the fluids you take in will build up in your body. It is **very important** to weigh yourself before every dialysis treatment. Fluid gain between dialysis sessions should **not be more than 5% of your estimated dry weight**. If too much fluid is gained between dialysis sessions, it is more difficult to remove all the fluid during a dialysis session to reach your dry weight

What happens if you go below your dry weight?

You get dehydrated causing:

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Light-headedness that goes away when lying down
- Cramping
- Nausea
- Restlessness
- Cold hand and feet
- Rapid heartbeat

If you gained weight inform the dialysis staff so they can adjust your dry weight

How too much fluid gain affects your health

Too much fluid can harm the body in many ways:

- Weight gain caused by fluid
- Increase in blood pressure due to too much fluid in the blood stream
- Swelling (edema) in the feet, ankles, wrists, face and around the eyes
- Abdominal bloating
- Shortness of breath due to fluid in the lungs
- Heart problems, including fast pulse rate, weakened heart muscles and an enlarged heart

How does too much fluid affects your dialysis session?

- Can cause a drop in blood pressure
- Nausea
- Cramps
- Dizziness and weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Hospitalisation
- Extra dialysis sessions

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