

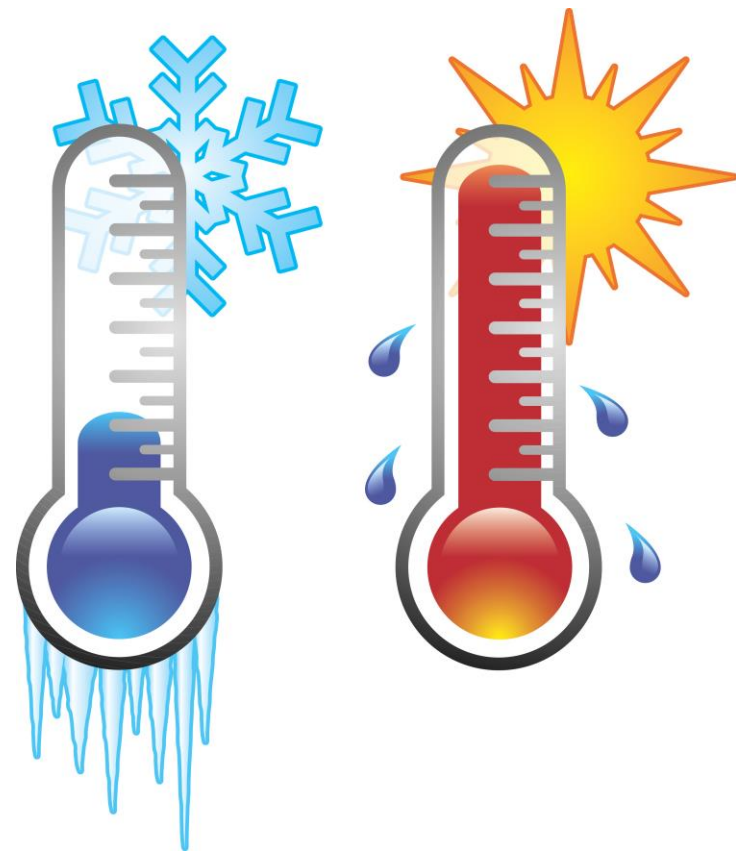


Why is it so COLD at dialysis centres?

There are many reasons why chronic kidney disease patients on dialysis may find they feel cold at their dialysis centres. Issues such as season change, lack of warm clothes, sitting under an air conditioning vent or even your physical or medical condition may be why you find dialysis centres on the colder side. Here are some things that might be causing this and ways you can get more comfortable when you go in for your dialysis treatments.

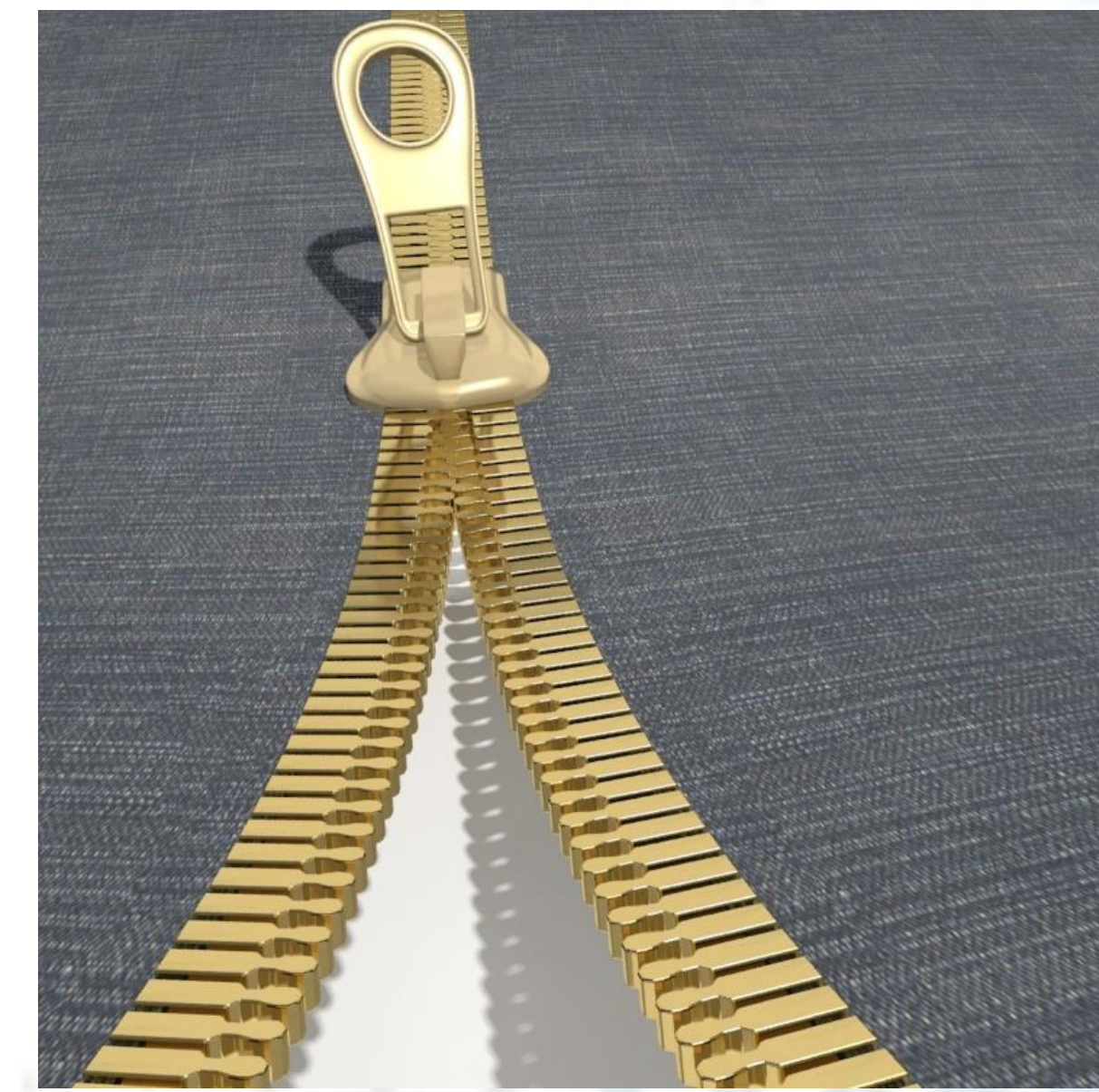
Summer outside, winter inside

Sometimes the cold temperature inside the dialysis centre can be a stark contrast to the warm weather outside. Patients who go to their dialysis centres during the summertime may arrive wearing their light summer clothing, forgetting to bundle up for their treatment. Although the weather outside is warm, remember that the air conditioned dialysis centre may be cold and bring proper clothes to keep warm



Skin exposure

If you have a graft or fistula in your upper or lower arm or leg, or a catheter in your chest, your access area is exposed during your dialysis treatment. Uncovering your skin, by rolling up your sleeve or your pants, or unbuttoning your shirt, may make you feel cold, especially when you remain in the same place for a long time. Nurses need to be able to see the access site to make sure everything is going okay. If a needle comes out of the access and a patient is losing blood it can be seen and fixed immediately because the access site is in clear view. Wear clothes with zippers to only expose the access area and keep yourself warm



Air conditioning

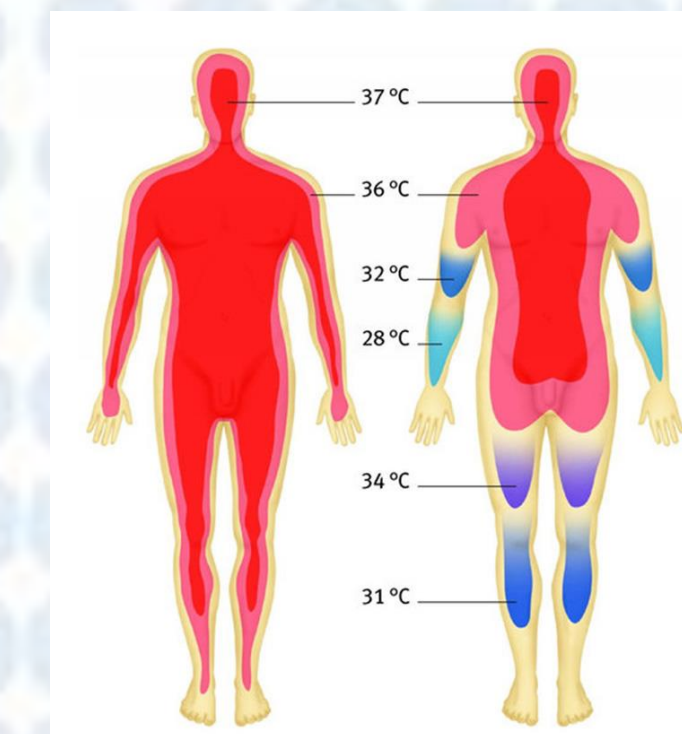
The temperature in a dialysis centre must be kept between 20°C and 24°C at all times. According to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993* a safe working environment must be created at all times, this includes maintaining the workplace temperatures. Temperatures that are too high or too low can contribute to fatigue, heat illness and cold-related conditions, like clotting of your blood in the dialysis lines while receiving your treatment. Too high temperatures can increase the survival of airborne viruses, bacteria and fungi.

In cases where the air conditioning has been set between 20°C and 24°C request the dialysis staff to provide extra blankets to warm you up. Ensure you bring along your warm, cosy clothing to keep you warm during your treatment session



Blood temperature

The dialysis process sends your blood through the dialyser, filters out waste and toxins and then sends the clean blood back into your body. When the blood is outside of your body, it becomes cool. But when it flows through the dialyser alongside the dialysis solution, it warms up again. Temperature of the dialysate solution, as well as your body temperature, is taken into consideration during the treatment. The dialysis machine is programmed to monitor the dialysate to be sure it is in the correct temperature range to ensure that it is not too hot or too cold. Alarms are set to go off if the dialysate temperature goes too high/low during the treatment. Slight differences in temperature may occur during treatment depending on your temperature and dialysate temperature. Some patients feel colder because of this difference. Normal body temperature is between 35°C to 37°C.



Healthcare team is moving around

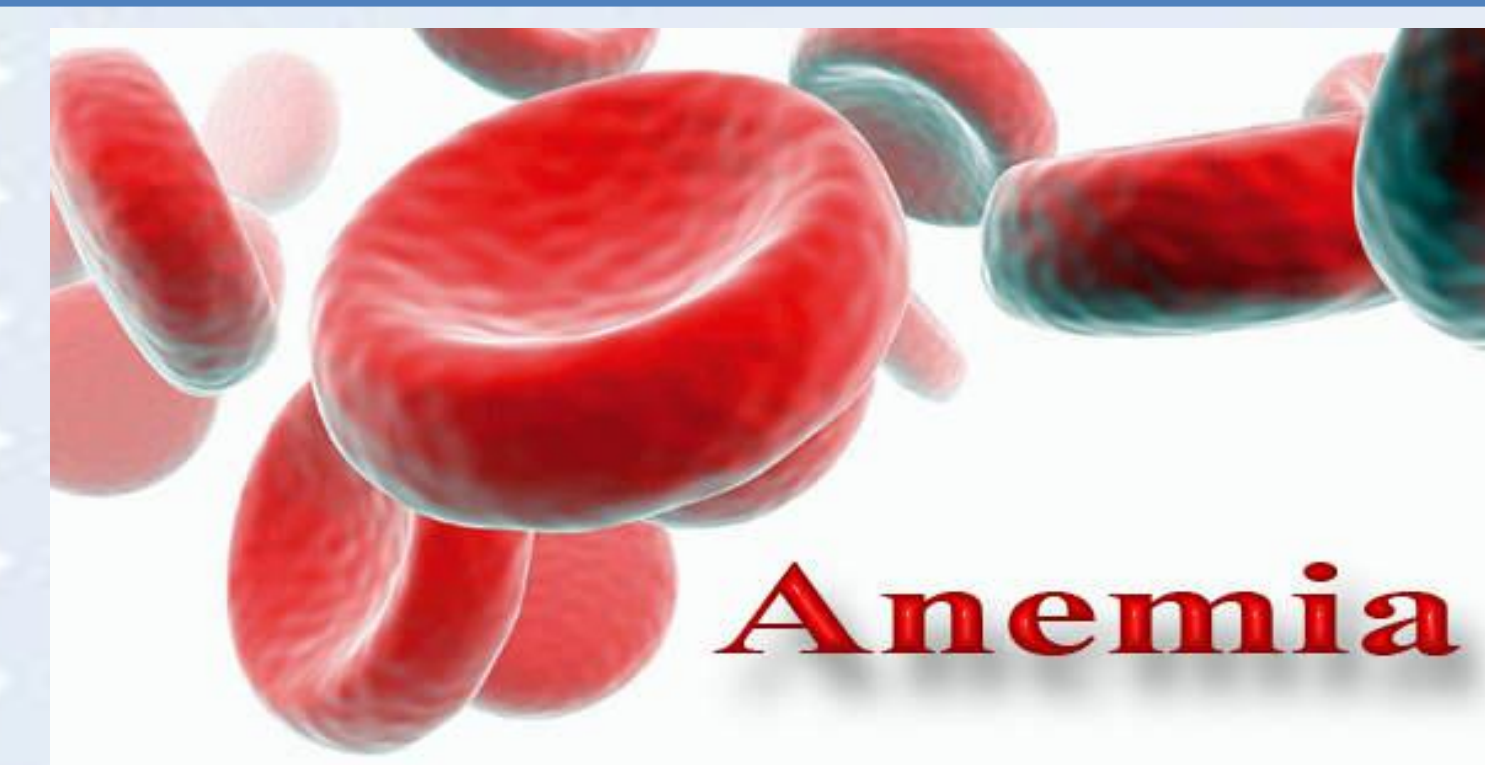
When you are at the dialysis centre, rarely do you see your health care team off their feet. Staff moving around to take care of all the patient needs, keeps them on the go, which keeps them warm. Patients sit and dialyse usually between three and four hours and the lack of movement may tend to exacerbate (make worse) the cold. If you are uncomfortable, talk to your nurse to find out if an adjustment can be made to the air-conditioner temperature, bearing in mind it can not be set higher than 24°C.

Tips to keep you warm at the dialysis centre

- Pay attention to clothing. If it is summertime, bring a jacket or loose sweatshirt with you
- Pack a hat. This helps prevent heat from escaping at the top of your head
- Protect other limbs from the cold: bring gloves, scarves, thick socks or booties and a blanket
- Store your warm attire in a tote bag and keep it in the car or near your front door so you can remember to bring it to the dialysis centre. You may forget how cold the dialysis centre is, especially in the summer. Ensure you wash your warm attire regularly to reduce the risk of infection
- Talk to your doctor about concerns as to why you feel cold often, as the cause might be medical

Anaemia can cause you to feel cold

Have you ever noticed that not only are you cold at the dialysis centre, but that you tend to feel cold in other places, too? Many chronic kidney disease patients have anaemia, which aside from making you feel tired, can also make you feel cold. Anaemia in kidney disease patients leads to not producing as much heat in their bodies due to fewer red blood cells which carry oxygen through the body. Low iron can also be a reason why you feel chilly. Talk to your doctor about how you can control your anaemia.



<https://www.davita.com/kidney-disease/dialysis/life-on-dialysis/why-is-it-cold-at-dialysis-centers?/e/5294>