



REDUCING HOSPITALIZATION & EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS: BEST PRACTICES IN FLUID MANAGEMENT

The following interventions in fluid management have been successfully implemented in Midwest Kidney Network dialysis facilities to reduce the risk of inpatient admissions and emergency department visits related to volume overload.

Have a best practice to share? Please let us know! claire.taylor-schiller@midwestkidneynetwork.org

BEST PRACTICES

- **Shift the Missed Treatment Mindset:** Utilize scripting for staff to follow when a patient calls in to miss a treatment. Be proactive with rescheduling treatments when a patient calls off. Replace “would you like to come a different day/time?” with “we can provide your makeup treatment on X day at X time.”
- **Open Chair for Extra Treatments:** At the start of each week, identify potential open chair times for additional or rescheduled treatments. For MWF only clinics, coordinate with a sister clinic as able to communicate weekly chair availability to schedule extra treatments or missed treatments on TTS.
- **Bring Elements of Fun to Improvement:** Create a friendly competition or raffle to encourage attendance to all treatments. Patients can earn raffle tickets for attending complete treatments with the chance to win prizes. Facilities have also had the option for patients to use earned tickets to redeem for items such as kidney friendly foods, blankets, lip balm, or personal products that are donated. Facilities have provided “perfect attendance” certificates with a sugar-free candy attached, which were found to be motivating and patients looked forward to receiving them.
 - Utilize creative visual aids to assist patients with understanding fluid volume. Set up plastic containers in the lobby with various fluid volumes. Some facilities have used food coloring to dye the water red, yellow, and green to show acceptable to out of range fluid volumes. Have the patients pick up the containers to feel the different fluid weights and even weigh with them to see the impact of fluid volume on their weights.
- **Assist Patients with Strategies to Combat Thirst:** Educate on the role of sodium in fluid management and how sodium enhances thirst. Educate and/or provide reusable ice cubes, sugar-free candies and/or lip balm to patients. Some facilities utilized items like these as prizes or seasonal gifts.
- **Have a Heyday with a Weigh Day!** Hold a “weigh day” at the clinic where staff assist patients in weighing in and out to ensure accurate weighing processes. Discuss the importance of accurate

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weights in achieving optimal fluid status. This has been found to be particularly helpful around seasonal weather changes when clothing, outerwear, and footwear changes.

- **Get to Know Community Resources:** Once barriers are identified, refer and connect patients with community resources for assistance with things like transportation and food insecurity, which can impact fluid management. Utilize community health workers to support patients with appointment reminders, dietary education, medication reminders, etc.
- **Connect the Dots:** Assist patients with developing their life plan and setting goals based on their values. Connect those goals with steps the patient needs to take to achieve them. For example, attending treatments so a patient who values time with their family feels well enough to attend their children's school activities. Start with easy, short-term actions, praise successes, and continue to build progress towards larger achievements.
- **Streamline Transitions in Care:** Establish read-only access to electronic medical record for local hospitals/healthcare organizations. Develop a clear communication pathway with the care management team of local hospitals to receive handoff report on discharge, including essential information on any changes in dry weight, medications, and cardiac status which may impact fluid management after a hospital stay or emergency department visit.
- **You're Not Alone When You Have an Empowered Team:** Strengthen team culture to improve outcomes and ensure sustainability. Share facility goals and progress with all staff via e-mail, team huddles, and staff education boards. This facilitates an all-team approach to fluid management.
 - Hold a weekly team review of fluid management. Share weight trends and assessment findings with staff and focus on patients of concern. Empower all team members, especially front line PCTs and nurses, to participate and speak up with what they are seeing in the patients they are caring for.
 - Identify fluid champions on the staff. Utilize team champions and delegate quality improvement work to various team members, regardless of title/role in the clinic. Utilize team members' unique talents to accomplish necessary tasks.
 - Involve NP/PA in providing patient education on fluid management, which strengthens and supports messaging and education provided by the dialysis staff.
 - Discuss appropriate diuretic use with nephrology providers for patients who continue to have urine output and would potentially benefit from additional diuresis.
 - Assess staff knowledge on fluid management principles. With newer staff, provision of an in-service, lunch and learns, or additional learning modules have increased confidence and competence in fluid management principles.