



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Dialysis Away from Base (DAFB) Frequently Asked Questions

Everyone with kidney disease should be able to live life to the full. Holidays and respite breaks can help to reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing. However if you or your child needs dialysis, there are certain things to consider when organising a holiday or any kind of travelling. This leaflet provides advice on having dialysis away from your normal location, whether that's at home or at a different hospital.

Q: Who is this leaflet for?

A: This leaflet relates to patients in Ireland who are receiving haemodialysis treatment for kidney failure (End-Stage Kidney Disease). It can be used as a guide by patients and staff to assist if you wish to receive haemodialysis treatment away from your normal Haemodialysis treatment location. This is termed "Dialysis Away From Base" DAFB. DAFB is only offered to patients who are suitable for treatment away from their normal base.

Q: How do I organise my Dialysis Away From Base and will my normal unit organise it for me?

A: The first step in organising DAFB is to ensure medical suitability: this should be discussed with your clinical team. Once medically assessed, a decision will be made whether you or your child are suitable to dialysis at another facility and are clinically well enough to travel. Dialysis capacity at some locations is limited and you may have to consider another location, dialysing further away from your proposed destination or a different time for DAFB.

We advise that you give as much notice as possible (at least 6 weeks in advance) and that no travel arrangements should be booked until confirmation is received from your clinical team on both sides.

Q: Will I have to pay?

A: HSE patients do not have to pay for dialysis treatment in Ireland in a HSE Hospital or HSE approved Contracted Units.

It should be noted that units do not provide transport to patients receiving DAFB. This should be discussed at local level to ensure there is no unexpected expense. Patients have to pay for their own travel and accommodation costs.

Patients planning to go abroad should be aware that there may be different arrangements in place depending on the country you plan to visit. The cost of a haemodialysis treatment may be substantial and are not reimbursed by the HSE. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) card allows you to access state-provided healthcare in all European Economic Area (EEA) countries. This may provide some payment towards dialysis depending on the country being visited. The EHIC is available free of charge at the following web site www.hse.ie/services

Q: Can any dialysis patient receive Dialysis Away From Base?

A: No. A patient requires medical approval to dialyse at another location and will need to be well enough to travel at the time of DAFB. Your consultant can discuss your

requirements with you or your child's requirements with you. A patient with complex needs who normally receives haemodialysis at a Hospital Parent Unit may not be able to dialyse in a Satellite Unit.

Q: What do I need to do if I fit the eligibility criteria for Dialysis Away From Base?

A: Whilst it does take some planning for DAFB to take place, your renal team will be able to assist you with organising this. It is best to give as much notice as possible of travel plans, minimum 6 weeks if within Ireland and up to 3 months outside of Ireland.

It is advisable to make sure that you / your child have all the relevant travel documents including Passports/visas needed for travelling abroad in plenty of time before arranging visits to other countries.

There is a mandatory enquiry form to be completed and returned prior to arranging travel. Please note that this information may be kept on file by the receiving dialysis unit.

Q: Can I arrange my Dialysis Away From Base myself?

A: We advise patients to link in with their 'holiday coordinator' or named nurse when arranging DAFB.

The Irish Kidney Association may be able to offer some practical advice and assistance in coordinating dialysis. Their coordinator can be contracted through their website on www.IKA.ie. The Irish Kidney Association has three self-catering accommodation locations in Ireland which consist of Tramore, Co. Waterford, Tralee, Co. Kerry and Killarney, Co. Kerry for peritoneal dialysis, haemodialysis and kidney transplant patients. They currently operate all locations on a one week basis from May to October.

Q: How often can I have Dialysis Away From Base?

A: This is dependent on a number of factors including suitability, availability and being well enough to dialyse at another unit. There is limited capacity within the units and access may be restricted. The frequency and length of dialysis sessions may vary from your normal routine and this will need to be considered prior to booking your Dialysis Away From Base.

Q: What happens if I can't get DAFB near my proposed location?

A: Unfortunately, dialysis capacity is at a premium at all locations nationally. Access is dependent on availability. The frequency and length of dialysis sessions may vary from your normal routine and this will need to be considered prior to booking your DAFB. There is no guarantee that you will be allocated haemodialysis treatment in your preferred location or time. Some locations are in greater demand than others. You may have to consider looking at dialysis further away from your initial requested destination or going at a different date/time. We advise that you enquire as far in advance as possible.

Q: If I go abroad, will this affect my position on the transplant list?

A: If you or your child is travelling to a location outside Ireland you may be suspended from the transplant list for the duration that you are abroad. This reflects the need for a patient to be able to get to Beaumont Hospital within a short time period to have their transplant. You will need to speak to your renal team to find out if you will be suspended.

It is important that you inform the transplant coordinators regarding the duration that you or your child will be away and where you will be. Travelling to countries deemed as having high risk of blood borne viruses, such as hepatitis B may affect your transplant listing for up to 3 months.

It is important that you update the transplant co-ordinator if your plans change and to confirm on your return that you or your child are re-activated on the transplant list, following general health and infection control checks being completed.

Q: Can I use a private (non HSE) facility in Ireland?

A: The HSE has no arrangements with any private facility to provide dialysis away from base for patients. If a patient wishes to attend a private unit for dialysis, it is outside the standard scope of practice. Costs may be substantial and are not reimbursed by the HSE.

Q: Are there polices in place for Infection Control?

A: Yes. The Department of Health have national guidelines. All Units in the Republic of Ireland are required to meet all the relevant infection control guidelines and for the infection control training and practices within their Unit. This must meet to the satisfaction of the HSE, HIQA and/or any future national/HSE Regulatory Body. National guidelines on the Prevention of Transmission of Blood-Borne Diseases in the Health-Care Setting are available on the HSE/NRO website. Haemodialysis Units outside Ireland may not provide the same level of infection control as applied in Ireland. It may be necessary therefore to do additional blood testing or carry out haemodialysis in an isolation unit on your return.

Q: Can I fly if I am on dialysis?

A: Yes, but it is important to plan flights around dialysis days. You / your child should not miss a dialysis treatment in order to travel. If you need to travel on a particular day then speak to your dialysis unit as they may be able to rearrange the session.

Q: Do I need to take out travel insurance?

A: Travel insurance is vital. Most standard policies do not cover Chronic Kidney Disease and it is likely that your insurance costs will be higher than someone who does not have a long-term health condition. You may need a letter from your kidney team confirming that you / your child are well enough to travel. It is really important to shop around and consider using a specialist insurance company. Remember to read the small print to make sure that you or your child would be covered for emergency treatment abroad or if you need to cancel your trip because of ill health. Please check your policy for any exclusion that may apply to health care abroad as individual polices may differ. Even if the people you are travelling with do not have a medical condition it is worth insuring them on the same policy as yours. This means that they will also be covered if you need to change plans because of your health. This may not be the case if you have different policies with different providers. Don't put off buying insurance until the last minute. Arrange it as soon as you have booked your travel so that you are covered in case you need to cancel. Remember to take your insurance documents with you in case you do need to make a claim when you are away.

Q: What about my medications?

A: It is advisable to plan ahead and ensure you have enough medication to cover you for the duration of your stay. You should carry a repeat prescription to cover an emergency. If you are travelling by plane, you should put medications in your hand luggage and declare any injectable medications to your travel provider. It is advisable to bring additional medication supplies in case of loss or theft of luggage.

Below are some useful links and contacts:

Dialysis Away from Base Enquiry form	Enquiry Form August 2019.doc
EHIC	www2.hse.ie/services/ehic/ehic
EU countries/EEA countries including Switzerland	www.ec.europa.eu/social/main
Irish Kidney Association	www.ika.ie
Health Service Executive	www.hse.ie
Treatment Abroad Scheme	www.hse.ie/services/treatment-abroadscheme
Primary Care Reimbursement Scheme	www.hse.ie/eng/staff/pcrs/online-services
National Renal Office	www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/renal
National Guidelines for Infection Control	www.hpsc.ie/a-z/hepatitis/hepatitisc/guidance



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