



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

National Renal Office

Guidance for Non Emergency Haemodialysis Patient Transport 2019

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Overview

End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) is the term given when kidney disease has progressed to a level such that a patient requires dialysis (haemodialysis or Peritoneal Dialysis) or a kidney transplant in order to survive.

When ESKD treatment to patients is delivered by in-centre Haemodialysis treatment, this requires travelling to a haemodialysis centre (Main hospital or satellite unit) three times per week for dialysis treatments. Each treatment can take up to 5 hours. Dialysis is a time-dependent life-saving treatment that has to be delivered on time, every time in order to preserve the life of the patient. Dialysis patients are a very frail group, with an average of three comorbidities, most are over the age of 60 and half require some type of mobility device. Dialysis is a complex and tiring treatment. Patients are generally not able to drive or take public transport post treatment. Effective transport for these patients is an absolute pivotal part of their care.

Haemodialysis transport should aim to provide support to patients with as little disruption to their daily lives as possible. A clear knowledge and understanding of the nature of haemodialysis care is fundamental if an understanding of how transport impacts upon the lives of patients and their carers is to be gained.

The number of haemodialysis patients requiring haemodialysis, and therefore transport, is projected to increase each year by approximately 5% per annum for at least the next decade. It is therefore imperative that haemodialysis service and transport providers work together to meet these patients' needs.

Patients should be supported in order to 'dialyse to live and **not** live to dialyse'.

Why patient transport is necessary for haemodialysis patients

Transport is an integral part of haemodialysis care for patients.

A patient on haemodialysis typically requires a dialysis treatment on a fixed time, alternate day schedule (Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) every week of the year in order to stay alive. Treatment schedules are organised to maximise the number of patients treated in a dialysis centre, and it is vitally important that all patients arrive on time. Late arrivals for treatment will result in curtailment of treatment not only for the individual patient but also for other patients scheduled for treatment in the dialysis unit. Patients are very aware of the importance of arriving on time for their dialysis treatment, as it has significant clinical consequences.

The dialysis treatment can be exhausting and patients usually feel tired and unwell after treatment. In most instances, a patient will have other medical conditions such as diabetes or hypertension which adds to the feeling of exhaustion and therefore it is advised that patients do not drive to or from their dialysis treatment. This leaves them completely reliant on others to transport them to and from their dialysis treatments.

If haemodialysis patients experience difficulties with their transport, it causes significant distress and unnecessary anxiety. Attending the hospital 156 times a year for many years, makes their transport needs very different to most other patient groups. Routine outpatient appointments do not last as long nor are they as frequent or tiring as regular dialysis sessions.

It is understood that not every patient wants or needs hospital transport to take them to their dialysis unit. Most patients are dependent on the non-emergency patient transport provided by the hospital in order to attend their treatment.

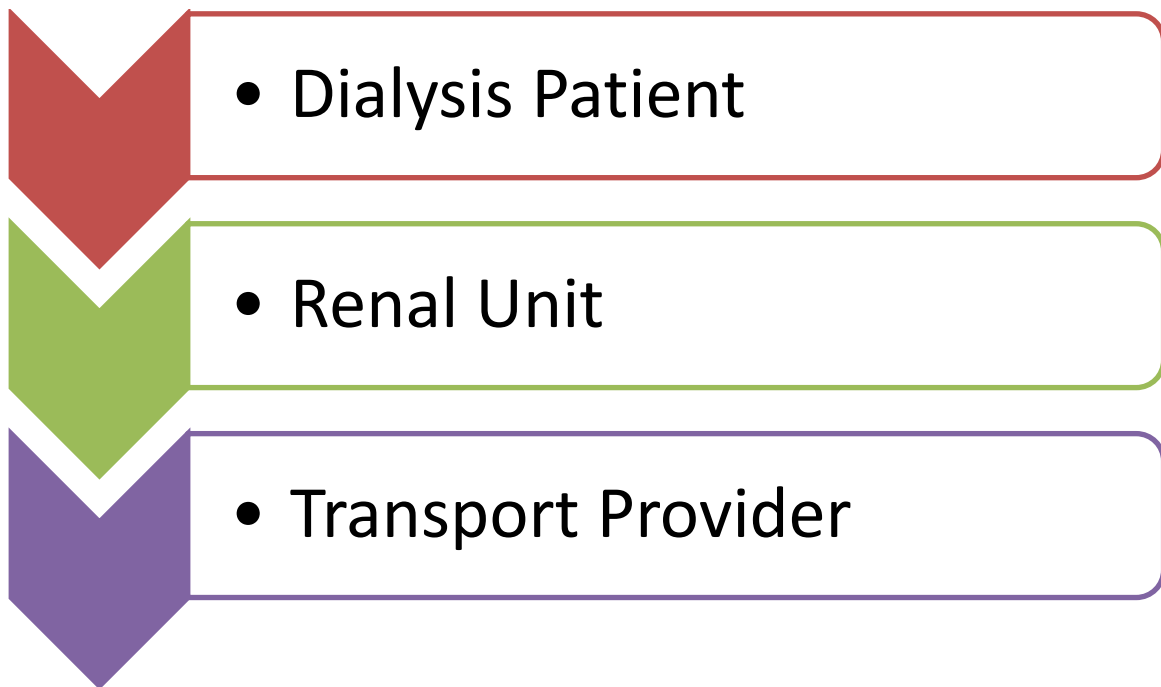
Transport for a haemodialysis patient is as fundamental a part of their care and access to transport should be assessed based on clinical need and reviewed on a regular basis at local level.

Current transport provisions

The staff at the haemodialysis unit are the main point of contact for the patient and /or carer. They will liaise with the transport provider to ensure adequate provision is made for transporting patients according to the mobility of each patient.

Some patients may choose to be driven by a family member or friend and their local unit may provide some reimbursement towards these costs.

Haemodialysis





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Process for taxis for Haemodialysis Patients

Name of Transport Company: _____

Contact Number: _____

Account Number is _____

When booking a taxi, you will require the following:

- Persons name and mobile number for whom the booking is made
- Account Number and contact details for your department
- Pick up location for the patients/client/ caregiver or both (including Eircode) and if assistance required due to mobility issues.
- Specify if wheelchair taxi/ stretcher ambulance is required and level of patient assistance required in the case of frail or elderly.
- Date and time of pickup – time of arrival is crucial in order to avoid unnecessary delays to patient treatment scheduling. Patients must arrive to the dialysis unit before treatment start time to ensure that prescribed treatment is delivered.
- Return time if needed. (Taking into account patient recovery time and well-being).
- Drop off location and if assistance is required due to mobility issues.

Grouping or shared transport should be considered for patients in the same local area while providing a quality service for patients and optimising value for money for the HSE.

- Reliability and availability is essential so transport providers should have emergency plans in place for severe/extreme weather conditions
- Transport providers should have the ability to deal with emergency situations and interact in a Professional, courteous and considerate manner with service users of the HSE and their families or other agencies whom they come into contact with.

You may require a taxi book that needs to be completed and a docket for each journey subject to local arrangements.

Contact should be made with your provider to discuss current and future service requirements.

Everyone has a role:

Everyone involved in haemodialysis transport has their own part to play in making this a more effective service.

The guide below identifies that each individual has a role in the provision of a patient centred renal transport service. It is acknowledged that there will always be exceptional circumstances which will impact upon this guide. However, this might be of assistance in highlighting responsibilities for all involved. The guide can be developed and adopted locally to enhance respect and understanding throughout the service. It can also be used for monitoring the quality improvement and performance in transport services locally.

Patient and Carer Responsibility

- To be ready at the allocated time for pick up from their home.
- To make the transport provider aware if they have made alternative travel arrangements.
- To be polite and respectful to the drivers and fellow passengers.
- To use the transport provided appropriately for dialysis appointments only and not for any unauthorised stops.
- Use of transport is only provided for the patient. Additional approval is required for a carer to accompany the patient if required
- To provide feedback to Hospital/Unit and transport providers with compliments or complaints.
- There is a zero tolerance approach to unreasonable behaviour with regard to patient transport.

Hospital / Unit Responsibility

- To ensure the appropriate transport is booked according to the mobility of each patient.
- To review regularly (timeframe to be determined) the mobility of patients and their need for transport to be provided.
- To ensure that the patient's dignity is maintained at all times.
- To liaise with transport providers and patients/carers and notify of any delays in the patient's treatment.
- To ensure adequate provision is made for transport when planning expansion of dialysis services.
- Transport should only be used for dialysis appointments and not for any unauthorised stops
- To provide transport providers with all the relevant patient information – mobility issues / frail / elderly that require extra assistance.
- To provide transport providers with information regarding the needs of haemodialysis patients.

Transport Provider Responsibility

- To meet quality standards outlined within the contract specification.
- To provide safe, clean, smoke free vehicles appropriate to patients' requirements.
- To ensure that the patient's dignity and respect is maintained at all times.
- To ensure all patients are properly secured into the vehicle with seat belts or wheelchair restraints as appropriate
- To provide all appropriate stakeholders with accurate information.
- To ensure timely pick up of patients.
- To have an awareness of the needs of the haemodialysis patient and act accordingly.
- To advise the dialysis unit of any concerns regarding the patient.
- To provide a flexible, patient focused service.

PAYMENT :

It must be noted that transport charges for adult patients are paid for by the Hospital / Hospital group that the haemodialysis patient is attending, i.e. money follows that patient/consultant

In the case of transport for paediatric haemodialysis patients, the costs are currently paid for by the Hospital / Hospital group where the child resides.

Transport for patients who have received a transplant will only be provided for clinic appointments if needed on medical grounds and with clinical approval.

Invoices for transport costs should be directed to the Business Manager for the relevant hospital / HSE Satellite contracted unit and paid through the normal channels

Signed: 

Date: 5th September 2019