Be Heard
Tips for Talking with Your Care Team

This tool has been developed by kidney patients from the ESRD NPFE-LAN*–Legacy Communications Team. It offers ideas for how to best talk to and build a relationship with your doctors, nurses, dialysis technicians, dietitian, and social worker.

**Ask questions.** If you have concerns or you do not understand something that is said, ask questions. If the information is still not clear, ask again in a different way.

**Make sure you understand.** When talking with your healthcare team, repeat back what you have heard in plain language. For example, you can say, “So, what I have heard you say is ...”

**Get smart.** Learn as much as you can about ESRD, dialysis, and your treatment options. Your healthcare team is a good source of information. They can also help you find useful resources.

**Share your story.** Tell your healthcare team about your interests, hobbies, and lifestyle. Understanding who you are will help you and your care providers make a plan of care (POC) that supports all of your healthcare needs.

**Stay safe.** Make sure that all members of the healthcare team wear gloves, wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before caring for you.

**Be informed.** Know what medications you take and why you take them. Keep an updated list handy. Request a copy of your lab results. Also share a copy of your medical records from all hospitalizations with your doctor and facility.

**Ask for help.** Reach out to family, friends, or your caregiver. Invite them to your appointments. Encourage your care partners also to ask questions.

**Connect with others.** Talk to other kidney patients. Find out if your facility has a peer mentoring program. Join a support group.

**Become involved.** Attend your POC meeting. Work with your healthcare team to decide on the best treatment for you.

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**For more information about your care, ask:**

1. **What is the main problem?**
2. **How can this be treated?**
3. **Why is this important for me?**

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