Peritoneal Dialysis: Dry Weight, Blood Pressure and Fluid Balance

Dry weight

When a person has kidney failure, the ability to remove excess fluid from the body is lost. Although a small amount of fluid is lost through the skin, in the stool, and from breathing, extra fluid must be removed by dialysis.

Your doctor decides on an estimated dry weight (EDW) or target weight without fluid. At this weight, your body has just the right amount of fluid. It is your best weight where you will have slight or no swelling, no shortness of breath, and a normal blood pressure. If you gain or lose real body weight, not fluid, your doctor will be able to tell by examining you.

To keep your weights accurate:

- Place the scale on an uncarpeted surface.
- Zero the scale before each use.
- Weigh in the same place, at the same time, with similar clothes.

Factors affecting dry weight:

- Taking too much fluid and salt.
- Body fluid losses from perspiring with exercise or from summer heat.
- Illness with vomiting, flu or diarrhea.
- Performing fewer dialysis exchanges than prescribed.
- Allowing daytime dialysis bags to dwell longer than prescribed time.
- Poor nutrition.
- An increase or decrease in appetite.
- Peritonitis.

More on next page ➔

Learn more about your health care.
Blood Pressure and Fluid Balance

Check blood pressure every day at the same time as your weight to know your fluid status and make adjustments in your PD. Fluid status may be reflected by having a normal blood pressure. However, problems with low or high blood pressure can occur when too much or too little fluid is removed daily.

Low Blood Pressure

A common cause of low blood pressure with PD is removing too much body water, which causes a negative fluid balance. You may also be below your estimated dry weight. Some signs are: dizziness, nausea, light-headed, cold clammy skin, thirsty, lack of concentration, vomiting, cramping and weakness.

If these signs occur, try these treatment options:

• Make sure you take your allowed fluid intake and drink salty broth.
• If you take blood pressure medicine, you may no longer need it because enough fluid is removed with PD. Call your kidney doctor to see if you should hold your medicine that day.
• Aim for a slightly higher dry weight and call the PD staff.
• Rest with your feet up.
• Call the PD staff if you have questions about treatment, or if your low blood pressure signs do not improve.

High Blood Pressure

A common cause of high blood pressure during PD is extra fluid being retained. This causes a positive fluid balance. This may happen when you are over your estimated dry weight. Signs may be: bloating, swelling in your face, feet, ankles, or hands, increased blood pressure, a 5 pound weight increase, shortness of breath and headache.

If these signs occur, try these treatment options:

• Aim for a slightly lower dry weight and call the PD staff.
• If your high blood pressure medicines do not lower your blood pressure, call your kidney doctor. The dosage of your medicines may need to be increased.
• Restrict your intake of fluid and salt.
• If you have diabetes, increase your glucose checks and insulin coverage as well.

• Call the PD staff if you have questions about treatment, or if your high blood pressure signs do not improve.

Both high and low blood pressure may be caused by other problems besides fluid. Call the dialysis staff if your blood pressure stays abnormal after you have tried to correct your fluid imbalance.

**Tips for Choosing the Correct Dialysis Solution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Too Dry or Below Dry Weight</th>
<th>Too Wet or Fluid Overload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Weak, tired, dizzy or cramping</td>
<td>• Bloated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low blood pressure</td>
<td>• High blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No spring to skin</td>
<td>• Swelling in feet and/or face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blurred vision</td>
<td>• Weight gain of 5 or more pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fainting</td>
<td>• Headache</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Weight is below normal</td>
<td>• Shortness of breath</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What To Do</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lie back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drink salty broth (if able to drink)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Call Dialysis Center if fluid build up continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Call Dialysis Center if no improvement</td>
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Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.