

Freedom Found in Home Dialysis

Nancy Potter | Goldendale, WA

In 2006, Nancy Potter underwent back surgery and had a series of ordinary lab results completed as part of the process. But when the results came back, the results pinged something she wasn't expecting.

Doctors informed her that her kidneys were showing signs of wear. A few years later her estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) dropped significantly.

It was at that point that Nancy received a chronic kidney failure diagnosis and learned she would need dialysis several times a week.

A huge impact on day-to-day life

The news was difficult but made even more so when Nancy realized she'd have to travel two hours round trip several times a week to receive dialysis treatment in The Dalles—a major change and commitment for Nancy and her husband.



Early kidney disease usually doesn't have any symptoms and symptoms of ESRD are similar to other conditions. Therefore, kidney disease is often missed even though there are simple tests that can diagnose ESRD.

Including coverage of kidney disease screening in wellness visits would drastically improve rates of early diagnosis of ESRD.

"I don't drive anymore because my blood pressure drops too easily so I have to depend on my husband to take me places," she said. "My car was getting pretty beat up and wearing out. And my body had a hard time getting used to [the drive and treatments]—my blood pressure dropped a lot."

But after a year of traveling back and forth to The Dalles, Nancy realized other options existed and found a new measure of freedom in home dialysis.

"I started hearing about how much more convenient it could be," she said. "So, I talked to the nurse and she set me up with appointments."

Reclaiming her freedom

While there's still a lot of work and a firm schedule required, Nancy is glad to have the option to receive her life sustaining treatment at home – especially throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It's a lot of work to do at home treatment," she said. "There's a lot of stuff – boxes, bags, cords, but you get your freedom out of it. At a facility I would have to go three times a week, and I was stuck in the chair. At home you can be a little mobile at least."

And transitioning to at-home care has been made easier by the support of her doctors and staff.

"The staff has been excellent," said Nancy. "If I have any questions I can just call and ask. I can get help with my ordering, talk to my dietician, anything I need."

Nancy spent a week in Portland getting trained and then headed out with all her new supplies. Now she manages two treatments a day from her own home.

Home dialysis provides many benefits, including:

- Greater lifestyle flexibility and independence.
- A less restricted diet.
- Longer lasting residual kidney function.