

Peritoneal dialysis at her home has put Erlinda Licup back in control of her schedule.

# dialysis

PERITONEAL

## Daily, at -home dialysis sets patients free.

Over the course of seven years, the disadvantages of hemodialysis had added up for Erlinda Licup. The 70-year-old Marion resident's energy plummeted after each four- to-five hour session, and her small veins made needle placement difficult.

But a huge obstacle was traveling to the center during inclement weather. Even in the worst conditions, Erlinda's life depended on getting to Mercy Health Plaza for hemodialysis.

Then, one day in 2007, she overheard a doctor talking about peritoneal dialysis. When she discovered you could do it at home while you sleep, she wanted to know more. She had one question: "What happens if I crash?" referring to the hypotensive episode that can occur during hemodialysis.

"When he said there would be no crash, I decided right there that I wanted to try peritoneal dialysis," Erlinda says.

Sara Bartlett, RN, Certified Dialysis Nurse, explains that peritoneal dialysis (PD) removes bodily toxins by using a solution called dialysate and your peritoneal membrane, which lines the abdominal cavity.

"When you do hemodialysis, you use the blood, a dialyzer (artificial kidney) and a machine to do the work of the kidney," says Sara. "With peritoneal dialysis, you actually use fluid that you place in the peritoneal cavity. Your peritoneal lining acts as the dialyzer. It pulls waste products across the membrane and into the fluid that eventually drains out."

Sara explains that both methods are effective; however, PD is a simpler process patients can perform overnight in their homes. To exchange the fluid, patients receive a catheter into the peritoneal cavity. They also need a small machine called a cyclor and the space to store a month's supply of dialysate.



### New Freedom

Peritoneal dialysis has put Erlinda back in control of her schedule.

"It's so convenient!" says Erlinda. "It's right here. When it's cold or stormy, I can stay inside all day."

Erlinda now spends 15 minutes connecting to the cyclor each evening. In the morning, it only takes 10 minutes to disconnect.

"I have more energy, and that's the big difference," Erlinda says, adding that she sleeps better. "Now I go for a walk when I get up. I even do exercise tapes and water aerobics. It makes me healthier and stronger."

Erlinda enjoys being active. During a weeklong family reunion in Chicago, she took the portable cyclor along. If she had been on hemodialysis, she would have spent 15 hours that week at a Chicago-area dialysis center. Supplies can be shipped to a patient's destination.

### Getting Started

Before someone starts PD, he or she is tested for dexterity. The individual also follows a five-week training regimen. Monthly office visits and access to peritoneal nurses keep patients on track.

The cost for PD is similar to the cost of hemodialysis. But the real payoff is in its flexibility.

"If you get home late, you can put yourself on the cyclor later that night," says Sara.

Sara says PD is easier on the body. "With hemodialysis, the blood pressure fluctuates a lot more. PD is easier on your heart, your blood pressure doesn't fluctuate, and your lab levels don't go up and down as much."

"There's no correct form of dialysis," notes Sara. "It's what works best for the patient. Dialysis should work into their lifestyles instead of them working their lives around dialysis."

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*Erlinda Licup*