

# Paying for Kidney Disease Treatment

## VA Benefits and Kidney Disease Treatment

Kidney disease can be costly. There may be new medicines for you to take and many clinic visits. If your kidneys fail, you may need a kidney transplant or dialysis.



The good news is, there is help for you. You don't have to go it alone. **If you are an enrolled veteran**, the VA will help make sure that you get the care you need, and cost will not be a factor in the care you get. Your social worker can help you find local resources and can help you with [VA health care benefits](#), employer insurance, and Medicare questions.

**Are you homeless? The VA can help.**

Call the National VA call center for homeless veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

## The VA Pays for Kidney Transplants

When you are eligible for VA health care, your kidneys are covered, too. If your kidneys fail and you need a kidney transplant, the VA will help you.

You can get a transplant at one of the VA's six regional transplant centers in:

- Pittsburgh, PA
- Nashville, TN
- Iowa City, IA
- Portland, OR
- Miami, FL
- Birmingham, AL



Photo Credit: Spc. Laura Owen

The VA will pay for your travel to the center and for the surgery. The VA will pay for a kidney donor to travel to a VA transplant center for tests and transplant surgery, too. And, the VA will pay for the immune suppressing drugs you need to keep the new kidney healthy—for as long as the kidney lasts. To learn more about what to expect from a transplant, visit the Treatment Room. To learn more about VA transplant services, talk to your care team or visit the [VA national transplant program](#) website.

## The VA Pays for Dialysis of All Kinds

Dialysis is a service that is part of your VA health benefits. If there is a VA dialysis center in your town, you may be able to get your care there. If not, the VA will pay for you to get home dialysis or in-center care from a non-VA center. The VA will have a contract with the center. Your VA social worker will help you work out the details of where to go to get the treatment you want. To learn more about all the different ways to do dialysis, visit the Treatment Room.



## VA Grants May Pay for Home Changes for Dialysis

If you choose a type of dialysis that is done at home, your home may need changes to the wiring or plumbing. These changes can be costly. VA grants for “home improvements and structural alterations” (HISA) may be able to help you. Talk to your VA social worker if you want to do home dialysis and need help to pay for wiring and plumbing changes.



# Kidney Failure Entitles Most U.S. Citizens to Medicare

You may be entitled to Medicare\* if your kidneys fail.

Medicare is a national health insurance plan. You earn credits toward Medicare by working and paying taxes. You must qualify for Medicare by having enough credits for your age—or being a spouse or child of someone who has enough credits. Once you get Medicare, it is not just for kidney disease. There are three ways to get Medicare:

- Be over 65
- Be disabled
- Have kidney failure at any age

You **DO** need to apply for Medicare—it won't just come to you. Your social worker or the Social Security office can help you if you have questions about the forms—or about how the VA and Medicare or your other health plan work together to get you the care you need.

\* Links will take you outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs website. VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of the linked websites.



A sample Medicare Health Insurance card for John Doe. The card features the Medicare logo and the text "MEDICARE HEALTH INSURANCE" at the top. Below this, it lists the phone number "1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)". The beneficiary's name is "JOHN DOE", and the Medicare claim number is "000-00-0000-A". The card also indicates the beneficiary is entitled to "HOSPITAL (PART A)" and "MEDICAL (PART B)", both with an effective date of "01-01-2007". The sex is listed as "MALE". A "SIGN HERE" line is at the bottom left, and a large "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid on the right side of the card.

NAME OF BENEFICIARY	SEX
JOHN DOE	MALE

MEDICARE CLAIM NUMBER	EFFECTIVE DATE
000-00-0000-A	01-01-2007

IS ENTITLED TO	EFFECTIVE DATE
HOSPITAL (PART A)	01-01-2007
MEDICAL (PART B)	01-01-2007