



Northwest Renal Network

Helping Navigate Kidney Disease

Patient Bulletin



Our mission is to promote optimal dialysis and transplant care for kidney patients in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington

We Can Help With:

Care concerns

Patient rights

Transplant

Treatment options

Travel and dialysis

Questions about employment

Access to our library of resources

Dialysis Needle Fear: Easing the Sting

Almost no-one likes needles. But for some, needle phobia is much more than a minor fear: it's a terror that can scare you away from medical care. Dialysis patients face needles more often. Here are some ways to reduce needle fear.



What you can do:

- Ask questions.
- Address pain control with your doctor. Ask:
 - Is *Emla (Lidocaine) Cream* an option?
 - Would anti-anxiety medication help?
 - Is self-cannulation an option (sticking your own access-putting in your own needles)?
 - Can you learn the buttonhole technique?
- Learn about relaxation exercises such as deep-breathing or visual imagery. Practice them.
- Every patient experiences pain differently. Write down and keep track of your own level of pain.
- Report your levels of pain to the doctor.
- Know what your access should look and feel like.
- Assist the staff with needle placement. If the person is sticking you and it feels right say "When you do it that way it feels right." If something feels wrong say "When you do it this way, I feel more pain."
- Talk to your social worker about your concerns and/or fears.

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nwrnbulletins@nw16.esrd.net