

Preventing Peritonitis

Peritonitis: Symptoms, Treatment, Prevention

Dialysis patients have a greater chance of getting an infection. Your body's immune system may not be as strong as a person who does not have kidney disease. The type of treatment you receive may also put you at risk for an infection.

Peritoneal dialysis (PD) uses a catheter to remove waste products from the blood. The catheter is placed in the lining of the belly, called the peritoneum. If harmful germs, like bacteria or fungi, get on the catheter, you may get peritonitis.



What is peritonitis?

Peritonitis happens when the inside lining of your belly or abdomen is red and swollen. This lining is called the peritoneum.

How can I tell if I may have peritonitis?

Peritonitis can look and feel different in different people. The most common symptom is severe pain in the belly area. This pain may start light and get worse when you move. You may also notice that you are not very hungry and that you may feel nauseous.

Other signs you may have peritonitis are:

- A sore and swollen belly,
- Chills,
- Fever,
- Vomiting,
- Less urine than normal, and
- Cloudy fluid during peritoneal dialysis treatment.



How is peritonitis treated?

Peritonitis can be very serious or life-threatening. You should call your doctor or PD nurse right away if you have any of the signs above. You may be admitted to a hospital. Most times, you will be given medicine to fight the infection.

How can I avoid getting peritonitis?

If you are a PD patient, you might be able to avoid getting peritonitis by following these tips:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before you touch your catheter. Be sure to clean between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Wear a face mask during treatment.
- Keep your supplies sterile or free from germs. Ask your PD nurse about ways you can do this.
- Talk to your PD nurse about using a medicine cream on the catheter exit site every day.



If you think that you may have peritonitis, call your doctor or PD nurse right away.
If you cannot reach a member of your home care team, seek other medical care.

National Kidney Foundation. (2020, May 20). Peritonitis. Retrieved from <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/peritonitis>



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