

Employment ^[1]

Employment and having a career are often major events in our lives. As children, we talk about what we want to be when we grow up. As adults, asking about where we work or what we do for a living are ice breakers when meeting new people. And friends often discuss the good and the bad about their jobs. Having a job provides financial support, possibly health insurance, emotional support and gives us a sense of purpose. We often feel good about what we do, the friends and colleagues with whom we interact, and the success and accomplishments we achieve. For many of us, our jobs define a part of us.

So, when people find they have a chronic illness, feel too sick to work, and have used all of their sick days and available time off, they wonder what to do about their jobs. Sometimes the doctors and health care team will suggest that someone with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) quit work which only adds to the dilemma of what to do. People in the later stages of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and those with ESRD may feel so sick and weak that they feel they have no options but to quit work. Their energy levels are low, they are dealing with the reality of having a chronic illness, and they might feel an array of emotions such as sadness, anger, anxiety, and depression. It is important to learn about how to live well with kidney disease, both physically and mentally.

But now may **NOT** be the time to quit work. It always seems to be harder to find another job and people often start to feel better after they adjust to the diagnosis of CKD, start dialysis, adjust to their medications, and/or have a kidney transplant. Try to give yourself the time you need so that you can make an informed decision that is right for you. You may have more options than you know and once you feel better, you will be better able to make a decision based on your physical health, mental health, finances, and quality of life. The article [?Keeping Your Job When You Need Dialysis?](http://www.homedialysis.org/life-at-home/articles/keeping-your-job-when-you-need-dialysis) at <http://www.homedialysis.org/life-at-home/articles/keeping-your-job-when-you-need-dialysis> ^[2] will give you tips on what you can do as well as how to make treatment and dialysis work together.

You may want to talk to your employer about having chronic kidney disease, especially if you will need to take time off, adjust your job duties, or need special accommodations. It's better to make an appointment for this discussion and not just bring it up in the hallway or interrupt your boss at an inappropriate time. It will be helpful to share information about the disease, the treatment, and what it means regarding your work. Many employers don't know anything about CKD and you will want to educate them and clear up any misperceptions. If you need to take time off or adjust your schedule you will need to discuss this in detail.

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[1] <http://www.dpcedcenter.org/employment>

[2] <http://www.homedialysis.org/life-at-home/articles/keeping-your-job-when-you-need-dialysis>