

Life often brings the unexpected. When that happens, DCL is here to help. This is the story of Sidney Ackerman as told by her mother, Michele. Sidney is a high school senior and DCL patient:

My husband, Sidney, and I had been in total fear since we found out in the ER Sidney was in advanced kidney failure. We were hearing so many scary terms and none of them seemed a better alternative than the other. It was only Sidney and I who were at the hospital when Dr. Glathar told us Sidney would need dialysis and a kidney transplant. My thoughts went immediately to this is my worst fear for my child to I can't lose her and then what do I have to do to fix this all while trying to listen and keep Sidney calm who had started crying at this time.

We settled into peritoneal dialysis at home without any issues. We all have our part in Sidney's dialysis. Dave empties, disinfects, and rinses the bucket and throws away the used supplies. He also is the one who is home when the supplies are delivered by Baxter. Sidney does her vitals nightly and sets up the machine on the weekends. Michele sets up the machine during the week since Sidney has dance most nights and she gets to bed earlier if the machine is ready to go when she gets home. Michele also orders the supplies from Baxter. Dialysis hasn't interfered with our activities or schedule. Sidney has two different time schedules depending on what night it is. Some nights she gets home later from dance and doesn't have as much time for all the exchanges for a 9-hour treatment. She selects the 8-hour treatment on those nights. She gets to skip dialysis on special occasions like prom or a dance recital. The nurses and Dr. Glathar understand she is a young person who has special events that make dialysis difficult to fit in sometimes.

A good support system around us has made Sidney's diagnosis easier. We have family, friends, and co-workers who regularly check-in with us to see how we are doing. We also have an amazing amount of support at the Dialysis Center. We received excellent training from Nurse Angie. She made sure we understood how to run the dialysis machine and how to keep everything sterile, so Sidney didn't get an infection. The nurses have been great about getting labs drawn from Sidney's stubborn veins. In the beginning they would send Gina the Blood Girl as Sidney calls her to draw blood for lab work. Now Angie can draw blood since they took the time to learn

how Sidney's veins are wired. We constantly get communication letting us know how labs are looking or to check on Sidney if there has been a change in her condition. We couldn't do this as well as we are if it wasn't for everyone at the Dialysis Center. Sidney has even said she can do dialysis because she loves everyone at the Dialysis Center.

Home dialysis is the perfect way to keep the life you had and fit in dialysis. Sidney can still go to school, dance classes, school activities and fit in dialysis since she does it at night while she is sleeping. It is the best alternative to going to the dialysis center every day. The best advice we can give is that you must listen and do what your nurses and doctors tell you to do. It isn't always easy because it is a change in the way you live, but the outcome will be much better if you follow their directions. They know what will make you better and you have to put trust in what they say. That is the only way to be successful with dialysis.



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