

Media statement

18 February 2019

There is no place like home for kidney patients

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) offers patients with kidney disease the chance to restore a little normality in their lives through Home Dialysis.

Home dialysis enables kidney disease patients to carry out their dialysis treatment in the comfort of their own homes.

Mathew Sullivan, Nurse Unit Manager, Nambour General Hospital Renal Unit, said dialysis could be extremely disruptive to a patient's day-to-day life, as well as the life of their carer.

"It's important we help their dialysis treatment fit in with their lives, not the other way around. Treatment is usually about three times per week for five hours, and for many patient's dialysis is a lifelong commitment.

"The SCHHS Home Therapies team, which implements the home haemodialysis program, work hard to make home treatment available to as many patients as possible, currently 17 on the Sunshine Coast.

"There are multiple factors that determine if home dialysis is feasible for patients, including having the necessary support at home to help them and their physical home environment," Mr Sullivan said.

"Those selected undergo an intensive training program. After a period of about three-months, when they can head home for treatment, they receive regular visits and ongoing support," he said.

Jake McMillan is one of the younger patients benefiting from home haemodialysis.

"Being at home means being more comfortable...and more of the food I like!" Jake said.

"I can use the time more productively now, I am studying art at TAFE, it gives me the opportunity to stay on track with that. Also, it is a good chance to catch-up on Netflix.

"Being self-reliant is important to me, home haemodialysis allows this. My family are a lot more easy-going and less stressed now they can see how well I can take care of myself. I am loving life and have a lot more time with friends and family," Jake said.

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People who are able to take advantage of home dialysis are often healthier overall, and may live longer.

Home dialysis allows for more frequent treatment for shorter periods of time. Frequent dialysis more closely mimics the natural functions of the kidneys, with less waste and fluid building up in the body between treatments. The increased frequency may contribute to lower mortality rates, fewer negative side effects and more favorable results overall.

Also at home, patients like Jake, can perform dialysis on their own schedule without missing out on the rest of their lives or having to stop working.

ENDS

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities will be available with home dialysis patient Jake McMillan and Nurse Unit Manager Mat Sullivan on Tuesday 19 February at 10am.

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