

Talk with your doctor about treating pruritus (itchy skin)

Pruritus is distressing, itchy skin, which is common in people on dialysis. The itchy feeling can be so constant and uncomfortable that it may disrupt your sleep and affect your quality of life. The good news is there are treatments to help.

Talk with your doctor or dialysis care team about your itchy skin, even if you have asked them in the past. This guide will help you make a plan with your doctor to treat or prevent pruritus.

Get ready for your next doctor visit

- **Be prepared to talk about the pruritus symptoms you have been feeling.**
- **Write down a list of questions to ask your doctor.** Consider the questions on the next page.
- **Bring a pen and paper to write down what your doctor says.** You can also ask a friend or family member to go with you and take notes or ask your doctor to print out the important information for you.

Describe your symptoms in detail



Be open about your symptoms, even if you feel embarrassed—it helps your doctor give you the right care.

Your pruritus symptoms

- How long have you had itchy skin?

- On what parts of your body have you had itchy skin?

- Think about the last month. How would you rate your symptoms? Circle one.
0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
 No itch Worst imaginable itch
- What home remedies or treatments have you used for itchy skin?

- The treatments I have used:
 Do not help Help some Help a lot



Learn more about pruritus and kidney disease at [KidneyFund.org/Pruritus](https://www.kidneyfund.org/Pruritus)

Ask your questions



During your visit, you may have limited time to ask all of your questions.

Write a number next to each question to rank them from most to least important. Start with 1 for the most important question that you want to ask first, in case you run out of time.

If you cannot print this guide, use a notebook or your phone to track your symptoms, write your questions, and take notes.

Questions to ask your doctor

- What can I do at home to help prevent pruritus? Are there any products I should use or avoid? Lotions? Soaps? Laundry products?

- What foods should I limit or avoid?

- What are my blood levels of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and parathyroid hormone? (High levels of these natural body chemicals may help cause pruritus). If they are not in a normal range, what should I do?

- What pruritus treatments can help me?

- My other questions:

Check that you understand what your doctor said

Repeat what your doctor said back to them **in your own words**. You can say:

“I want to make sure I understand... (repeat the information). Did I get that right?”