



**NEPHROLOGY PROGRAM  
DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Hemodialysis - Section 04 - Treatment Delivery - Neph 4-01  
Dialysate Temperature**

**No.: 00746** (TOH Standardized Policy Number)

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**ISSUED BY:**

Hemodialysis Clinical Practice Committee

**DATE OF APPROVAL:**

N/A

**APPROVED BY:**

Program Clinical Director and Division  
Head

**LAST REVIEW/REVISION DATE:**

2016/02

**CATEGORY:**

Treatment Delivery

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

2001/10

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

- The standard dialysate temperature should be 36°C
- The nurse may decrease the dialysate temperature 35.5 °C to manage hypotension. If the patient has recurrent hypotension and may benefit from routine use of lower dialysate temperature, a Physician order should be obtained
- Most patients will not notice feeling any different but if they feel chilled they should be advised to wear warmer clothes or use more blankets. If symptoms are uncomfortable then Dialysate Temperature should be reassessed by the Nephrologist

**PURPOSE:**

- To deliver a hemodialysis treatment with the optimal dialysate temperature to prevent hypotension and maintain patient comfort

**BACKGROUND STATEMENTS:**

1. Body core temperature averages 36.2° C in dialysis patients
2. AV fistula blood temperature averages 35.5° C

3. Warming of blood with hemodialysis leads to an increase in core body temperature
4. As blood volume declines during dialysis there is skin vasoconstriction with a decrease in usual skin heat loss. This leads to further increases in body temperature
5. When core temperature increases, a threshold may be reached when there is sudden vasodilation, which can lead to a “crash” in blood pressure or an acute hypotensive episode
6. The risk of hypotension can be reduced by avoiding “warm” dialysate
7. Lower temperature Dialysate ensures better cardiovascular stability
8. There is usually little or no increase in “cold symptoms” (chills) with lower temperature dialysate

**DEFINITION(S):** N/A

**ALERTS:** N/A

**PROCEDURE:** N/A

**DOCUMENTATION:**

- Document any variance of the ordered temperature in the progress notes.

**RELATED POLICIES / LEGISLATION:** N/A

**REFERENCES:**

1. Daugirdas, J., Blake P., Ing T., (2007). Handbook of Dialysis. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Philadelphia, PA USA
2. NKF-KDOQI Clinical Practice Guidelines
3. Pizzarelli, F. (2007) From cold Dialysis to isothermic dialysis: a twenty-five year voyage. Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation 22(4) 1007-1012
4. Selby, N., McIntyre, C., (2006) A systematic review of the clinical effects of reducing Dialysate fluid temperature. Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation, 21 (7):1883-1898

**COMMENTS / SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS:** N/A