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Bruce Burnside of Titusville visits DaVita Dialysis Center three times a week for kidney dialysis treatments. Each visit takes eight hours. Dr. Randy Zelen is the medical director of the center. JIM STEFANUCCI/Meadville Tribune

Published October 17, 2006 12:25 am - VERNON TOWNSHIP — Bruce Burnside of Titusville has a standing date three times a week.

## DaVita Dialysis Center works to meet patients' needs

By Jane Smith  
101706 —

VERNON TOWNSHIP — Bruce Burnside of Titusville has a standing date three times a week.

A quick glance shows a man dressed in blue jeans, cowboy boots and red shirt. He looks like he could be going to a movie theater or dance hall.

Instead, he spends eight hours, three nights a week, in a reclining chair — not at home watching television, but at the DaVita Dialysis Center, where he receives kidney dialysis treatments.

When many people his age are thinking of going to bed 9 p.m., Burnside gets in his car in Titusville and travels to the Park Avenue Plaza in Vernon Township to spend the night receiving the eight-hour treatment.

Diagnosed with sclerderma three years ago, 61-year-old Burnside now is retired from his carpenter job. Sclarderma, in his words, is a condition where "my immune system attacked me."

It left him with failed kidneys, necessitating the dialysis which removes toxins and excess fluid from the body.

Many dialysis patients have treatments of three or four hours each, during daytime hours. The center has 16 stations, which are filled every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and every night. Between 30 and 32 patients are served daily, seven days a week.

When offered the night-time option, Burnside, along with 15 others, signed up without hesitation. Three more are on the waiting list.

"It's a better process," Burnside said of the more lengthy treatment. "It's a lot more gentle. It takes longer," but for him it is worth it.

To remove the typical four quarts of fluid built up between treatments, it takes about four hours, according to the doctor.

"It's one-third more vigorous," he said, referring to the treatment.



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Stretching the treatment out means the process is more gentle, something Burnside appreciates given he also has other health problems.

Another advantage of the longer process is that "it is not as draining," said Burnside. Comparing how he felt after the eight-hour process versus the four-hour one, "I was not as tired out as I was. By the time I felt recovered, the day was shot. Now I'm ready to go as soon as I get out."

Other patients have voiced similar sentiments, according to Stacey Leach, director of the center. "They go home, take a shower and go right to work," she said.

But there is one great disadvantage, hooked up to the machine, Burnside can't eat or drink anything for eight hours — nor can he stand up. Patient's blood pressure could drop rapidly, causing them to choke on a food particle or fall if they were standing.

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