

NEED DIALYSIS WILL TRAVEL

Shannon Jackson travelled to 40 countries whilst on dialysis.

“Being diagnosed with CKD and being placed on kidney dialysis is a significant challenge for anyone to endure. There is rarely a ‘normal’ day for a dialysis patient. You can accept this as the new norm, or you can move on with your life and make dialysis fit into your daily routine.

I have always liked to travel and when I was placed on dialysis I was almost sure that my travelling days were over. But I wasn't ready to give up on my travel plans so I did some research on the internet and came across a company in the UK that specialises in arranging dialysis travel. I questioned how any of this could be possible.

I first contacted Lisa Parnell from Cruise Dialysis. I was very surprised to find that Cruise Dialysis offered dialysis travel on large cruise ships, small luxury cruise ships and even riverboats. I had many questions about how this would work: is it safe, who does the dialysis on the ships, would I be able to participate in activities during the cruise?

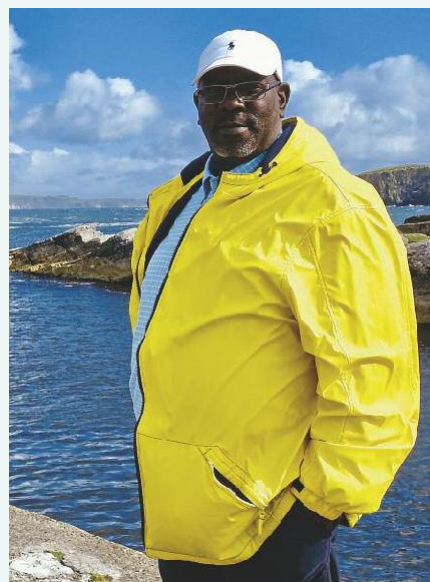
After many emails back and forth and a few phone calls, I was convinced that I should give this a try. Lisa was able to answer all my questions and assure me that I would be taken care of and I would

enjoy the cruise as much as I did before I went on dialysis.

My first cruise was on the Europa2, a small luxury cruise ship. After we arrived on the ship, the nephrologist met me in my cabin to discuss my medical needs and plan my dialysis sessions. I was amazed to learn that all the dialysis sessions on this ship were planned around my shore excursions and daily activities. I assumed that I was going to miss many of the activities because of the dialysis schedule. I was one of three dialysis patients on this cruise and we were taken care of by one nephrologist and one nurse. I was very surprised at the wonderful level of care I was given. At the end of my three week cruise, I have to say that I received amazing care on the ship and I had the opportunity to participate in every shore excursion that I selected.

One of my next dialysis cruises was on a 14 night riverboat trip on the Danube. By this trip, I felt comfortable with the dialysis plan, so I was ready to just enjoy myself. This trip was very relaxing and I made friends with the other dialysis patients.

We had a common bond and immediately began talking about our kidney issues. While the other passengers were trying to make friends with their fellow passengers, I was already enjoying



the company of my fellow dialysis passengers. I received excellent care from the nephrologist and the nurse. It was evident that they enjoyed providing this type of service and they went out of their way to accommodate us.

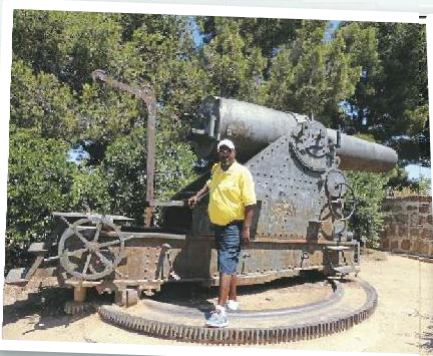
Over six years, I travelled on ten cruises on the Europa2, two riverboat cruises and one large ship cruise, all while I was on dialysis.

I found that using Cruise Dialysis made travel very easy. The most difficult part of the process was picking which ship I wanted to travel on and what countries I wanted to visit. Once those decisions were made, Lisa guided me through the rest of the process and managed all the details. I discussed my plans with my home dialysis centre and my nephrologist. I completed the required medical questionnaire and the routine laboratory tests.

To give you an example of what is possible while on dialysis, I travelled to Vietnam and South East Asia. I travelled to South Africa and was even able to go on a two-and-a-half-day safari.

For those of you who are still concerned about your first trip while on dialysis, Cruise Dialysis offers several cruises each year where Lisa accompanies a group of new dialysis travellers on their first cruise. This is a wonderful service for someone who is still concerned about taking their first dialysis trip or someone who is new to travelling on a cruise ship. My parting words are, ‘don't let kidney dialysis control your life.’”

“ I have to say that I received amazing care on the ship and I had the opportunity to participate in every shore excursion that I selected ”



Article published with permission of the author.

For more information on cruises with dialysis onboard, contact Cruise Dialysis Ltd at www.cruisedialysis.co.uk