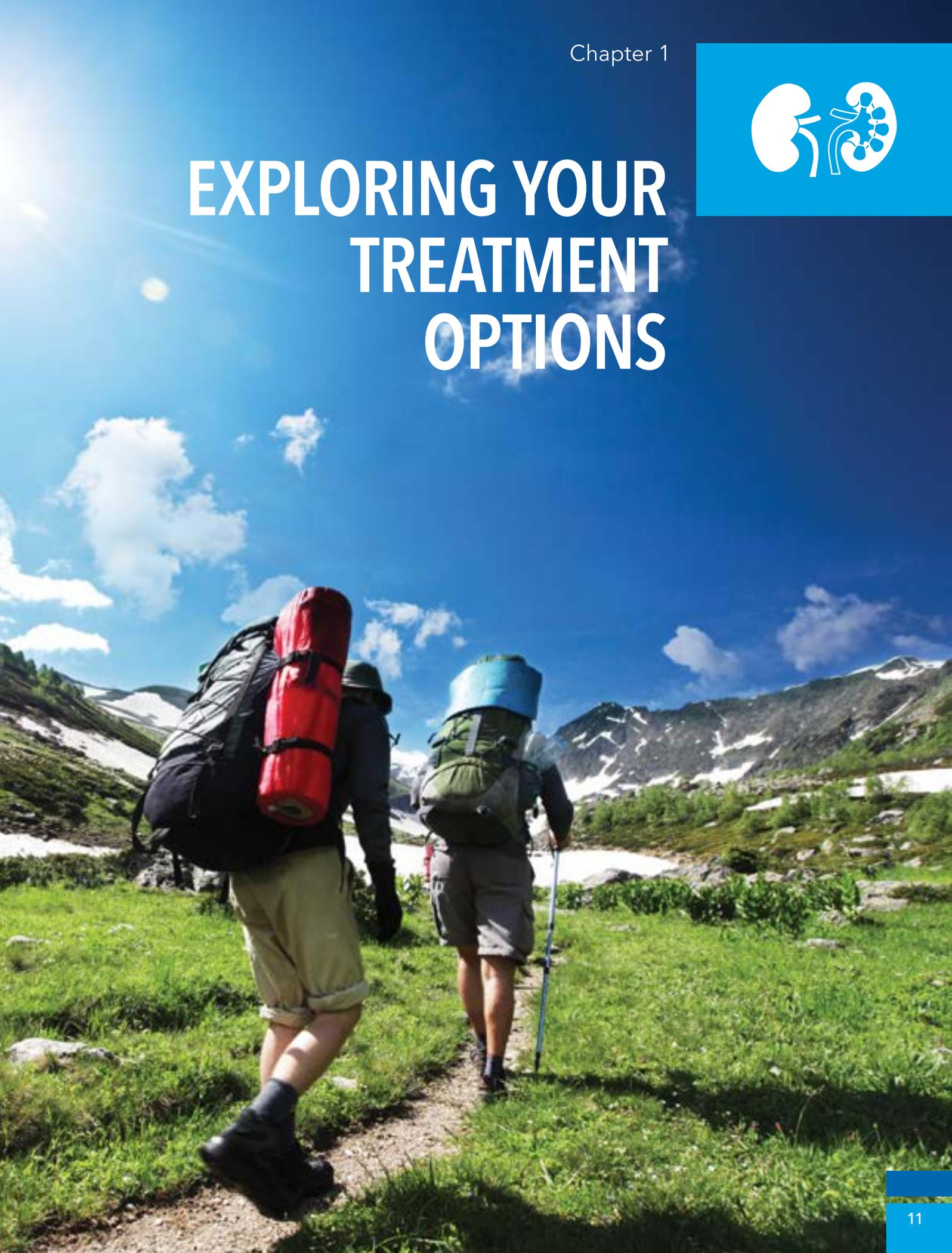




# EXPLORING YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS



## Exploring your treatment options



### HELPFUL TIP

There's a lot to think about when discussing your best treatment options with your healthcare team. You'll need to consider other medical conditions you may have, your health goals and personal circumstances. Take time to explore all of your options. Ask a lot of questions and talk with others with kidney disease about their treatment. You can do this through the Kidney Connect peer support program, which will match you with a trained volunteer. See [kidney.ca](http://kidney.ca) or call the peer support number at 1-866-390-PEER (7337). You may also want to participate in our online community at [kidneyconnect.ca](http://kidneyconnect.ca).

Many people can manage their kidney disease for years with diet and medication and never need to look at other treatment options. But if your kidney function drops to 15%-20% of normal capacity, your kidney healthcare team will discuss additional treatment choices with you for when your kidneys fail. Although you may feel well now, when your kidney function drops below 10%-15% of normal, you may start to feel symptoms such as fatigue and nausea, although this varies from person to person.

It's important to discuss potential treatment options with your healthcare team early on. That way, you'll have time to prepare, plan and ensure that you're making the treatment choice that's best for you, your lifestyle, health and personal circumstances. If you don't make a decision and prepare for your treatment method in advance, and your kidneys fail, you may have no choice but to start dialysis on an emergency basis, and this can be stressful.



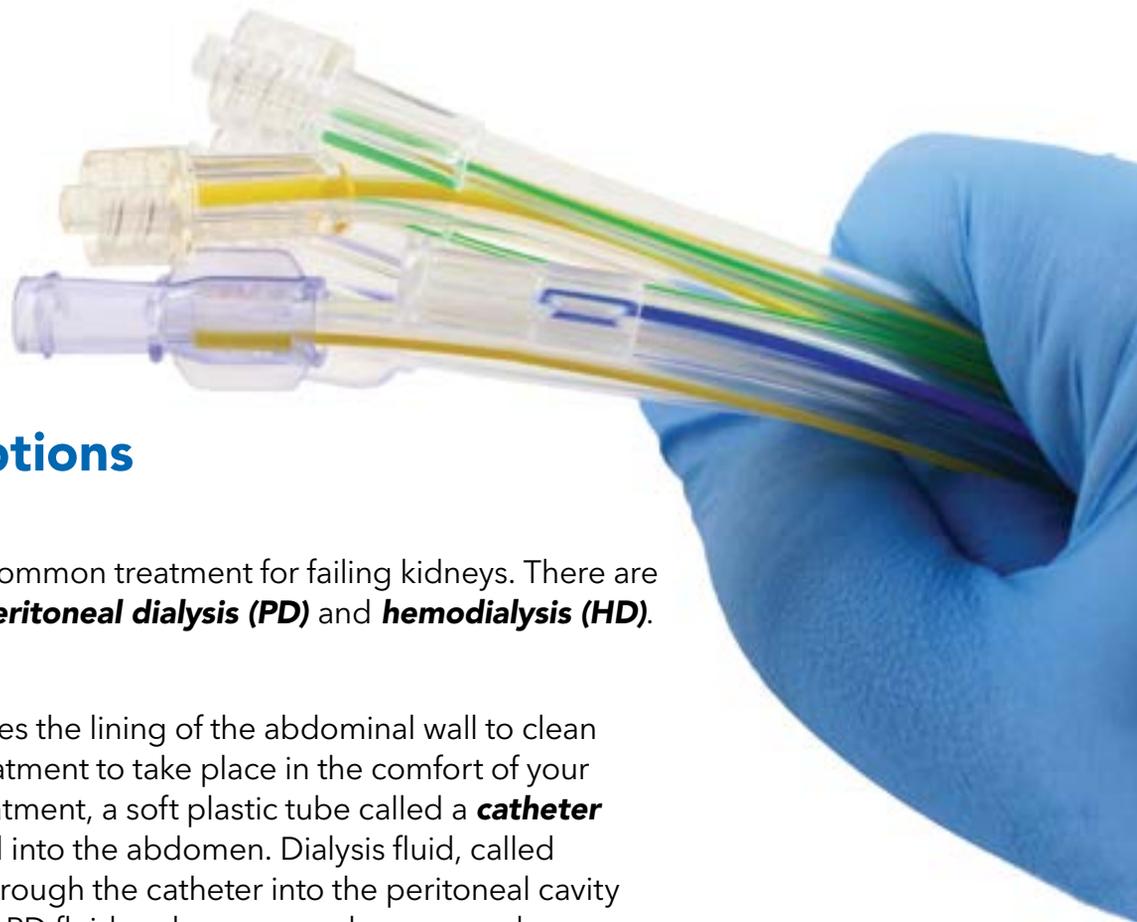
# Exploring your treatment options



There are three main treatment options: **dialysis**, a **kidney transplant** and **non-dialysis supportive care** (often called **conservative care**). This chapter will help you consider your options and different factors which may affect your decision. Regardless of which option you choose, everyone should do some **advance care planning**. Advance care planning is a *process* in which you think about what you would like to have happen, or not happen, if you become unable to make decisions about your healthcare treatment, or if you are unable to communicate your wishes.

See **Chapter Six:**

**Advance care planning** for more information about planning for your future care.



## Treatment options

### Dialysis

Dialysis is the most common treatment for failing kidneys. There are two types of dialysis: **peritoneal dialysis (PD)** and **hemodialysis (HD)**.

#### Peritoneal dialysis

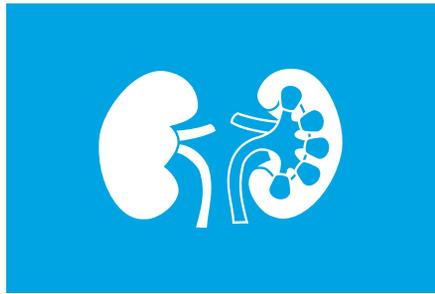
Peritoneal dialysis uses the lining of the abdominal wall to clean the blood, allowing treatment to take place in the comfort of your own home. For this treatment, a soft plastic tube called a **catheter** is permanently inserted into the abdomen. Dialysis fluid, called **dialysate**, is inserted through the catheter into the peritoneal cavity and “cleans” the blood. PD fluid exchanges are done every day or every night, although there is always fluid in the abdomen to remove toxins.







# Exploring your treatment options



The advantages of a transplant include better quality of life with fewer limitations than dialysis. For example, a transplant won't take hours of treatment time out of your week, and you may feel physically stronger, able to work, travel and stay more active. The main disadvantage of a transplant, in addition to the general risks of surgery, is that you will have to take medications every day, which may increase your risk of infection, and have other side effects.

## Non-dialysis supportive care (conservative care)

The focus of non-dialysis supportive care is on quality of life for the time you have, rather than on trying to live longer. Performing dialysis can be a burden for some people, and may lead to a decreased quality of life. If you choose non-dialysis supportive care, your healthcare team will help you use diet and medication to slow the kidneys' decline, manage any symptoms you may have and provide support to you and your family as you plan for the end of life.

People who choose non-dialysis supportive care are not able to have a transplant. Many have multiple illnesses and/or advanced age and dialysis may not be able to extend their lives. People who choose this option often feel that the burden of dialysis outweighs any potential benefits. They decide instead to focus on quality of life for whatever time remains.

See **Chapter Four:**

**Transplant** for more information about kidney transplantation.

### NOTES:

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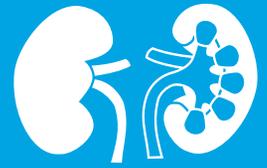
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See **Chapter Five:**

**Non-dialysis supportive care** for more information about this option.



# Exploring your treatment options



## What's important to me?

Take some time to think about what's important to you and write down your thoughts.

TOPIC	THINGS TO CONSIDER	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
<b>Work, school, and/or looking after others</b>	Daytime obligations (school, family, work) may limit your availability. Peritoneal and home hemodialysis allow you to choose what time to do your treatments and work them around your schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Leading an active life/energy level</b>	Treatment options such as peritoneal and home hemodialysis allow you to do dialysis more frequently. More dialysis does more of what kidneys do to clean your blood. This means you may have more energy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Independence</b>	Some people prefer to manage their own treatment (with support) whereas others prefer or need to be cared for in a clinic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				

# Exploring your treatment options



TOPIC	THINGS TO CONSIDER	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
<b>Travel (for pleasure or for work)</b>	If you need or want to continue to travel, peritoneal dialysis provides more flexibility than hemodialysis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Starting a family</b>	More frequent dialysis is needed when you are pregnant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Diet and fluid restrictions</b>	In-centre hemodialysis has more diet and fluid restrictions than peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Side effects</b>	Home hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis may mean fewer overall side effects than in-centre hemodialysis (blood pressure, heart issues).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				

# Exploring your treatment options



TOPIC	THINGS TO CONSIDER	NOT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
<b>How close I live to the dialysis clinic</b>	If you choose in-centre hemodialysis, you will need to travel to treatment at least three times a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Quality of life</b>	Choosing a treatment that best suits your medical and personal needs will help you achieve your best possible quality of life, even at the end of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My thoughts</b>				
<b>Anything else?</b>				
<b>My thoughts</b>				

(Adapted with permission from Kidney Health Australia)



# Exploring your treatment options



**8. Do you have any questions or concerns about your treatment options that you would like to ask your kidney healthcare team?**

a)

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b)

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c)

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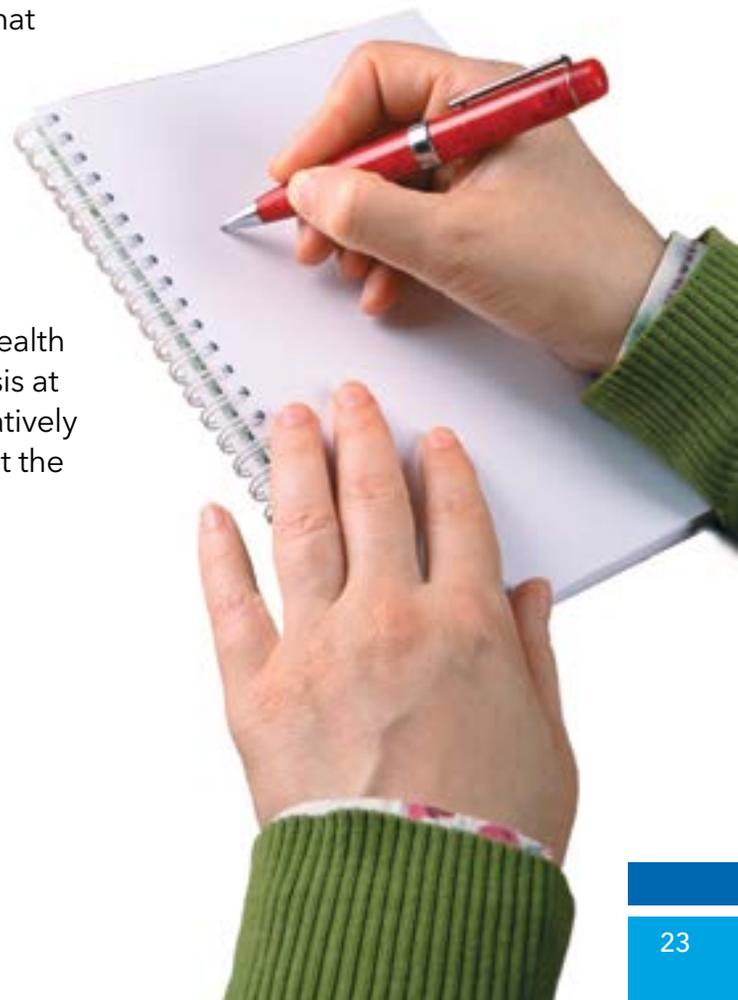
d)

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e)

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These questions are meant to help you explore what might be your best option given your current circumstances. Many people will have more than one type of treatment in their life, and in many cases, it is possible to change your treatment choice if things change. A transplant may become an option if, for example, you lose weight and take steps to maintain a healthy weight. Most people can, and do, switch dialysis types when their lifestyle or health calls for a change. You can also choose to stop dialysis at any time if you feel that the burden of dialysis is negatively affecting your quality of life. However, this means that the disease will run its course until the end of life.



# Exploring your treatment options



## Summary

- There are three treatment options: dialysis (either peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis), a kidney transplant and non-dialysis supportive care.
- There are advantages and limitations to consider for each option.
- Choosing the option that's right for you depends on your wishes, your health and other medical conditions and your personal life circumstances.
- Your healthcare team will discuss all the options with you and help you make a treatment decision.

### NOTES:

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