

Chronic Kidney Disease

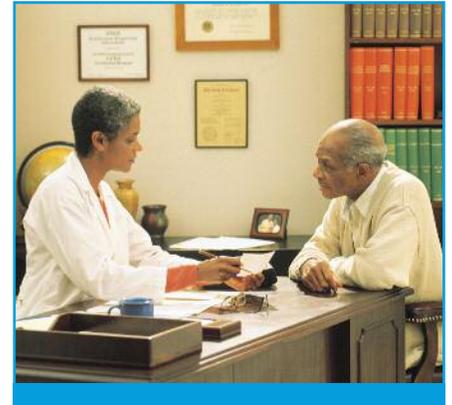


What Is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

The kidneys play an important role in keeping the body healthy. They remove waste from the body, balance blood pressure, make important hormones, and help keep bones strong. With chronic kidney disease (CKD), the kidneys gradually stop working. CKD can cause other health problems, like:

- Heart disease,
- Weak bones,
- Nerve damage,
- Fluid buildup,
- Weakened immune system.

CKD is most often caused by diabetes or high blood pressure, but other factors can cause the kidneys to stop working.



What Are the Warning Signs of CKD?

Many people with CKD may not notice some symptoms until late in the disease. These symptoms can include:

- Trouble sleeping and tiredness
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up
- Muscle cramping
- Having no appetite
- Itching
- Swelling in your feet, ankles, or around your eyes



How Is CKD Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask you about your medical history and any other health problems you have. To diagnose CKD, your doctor may order tests to check kidney function. These tests include: blood tests, urine tests, and blood pressure measurement. Blood and urine tests will check for signs that the kidneys are not working properly.



How Is CKD Treated?

If CKD is found and treated early, it can often be controlled so that your kidneys keep working. The goal of treatment is to prevent any more damage to the kidneys. Treatment can include:

- Taking medicine to treat other health problems that are causing kidney disease.
- Avoiding alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs that may harm your kidneys.
- Following a healthy diet and exercising regularly.

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- If your kidneys stop working, dialysis treatment may be needed. Dialysis involves a small cut in the body, where a tube will connect the body to a dialysis machine. The dialysis machine will do some of the work healthy kidneys do, like removing waste and extra fluids from the body.
- Kidney transplantation may be an option if the kidneys become too diseased and stop working.

Talk with your doctor about the best treatment plan for you.



Questions For My Doctor

- How can I stop kidney disease from getting worse?
- What is the best treatment for my chronic kidney disease?
- How does my diabetes or high blood pressure hurt my kidneys?
- Will I ever need dialysis or a kidney transplant?
- Do I need to change my diet or alcohol intake?
- Can I still take the medicines I normally take?
- What can I expect from dialysis?
- Are there activities I should avoid?



Bottom Line

- The kidneys play an important role in keeping the body healthy. With CKD, the kidneys gradually stop working.
- Symptoms of CKD are often not noticed until late in the disease.
- Tests of the blood and urine can help diagnose CKD.
- Treatment includes medicine and managing the health problems that can cause damage to the kidneys. Dialysis or a kidney transplant may be options for people whose kidneys have stopped working.

For More Information

- **National Kidney Foundation:** www.kidney.org/kidneydisease/aboutckd
- **National Kidney Disease Education Program:** www.nkdep.nih.gov
- **American Association of Kidney Patients:** www.aakp.org

Notes:
