

5 Things to Know About Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

Most people don't think about their kidneys until there's a problem. Learning the basics of CKD can help you feel more informed and in control of your health.



Your kidneys do more than clean your blood.

Healthy kidneys keep your body balanced. They help control blood pressure, keep your bones strong, and tell your body to make red blood cells. All these functions can be affected when your kidneys are not working well.



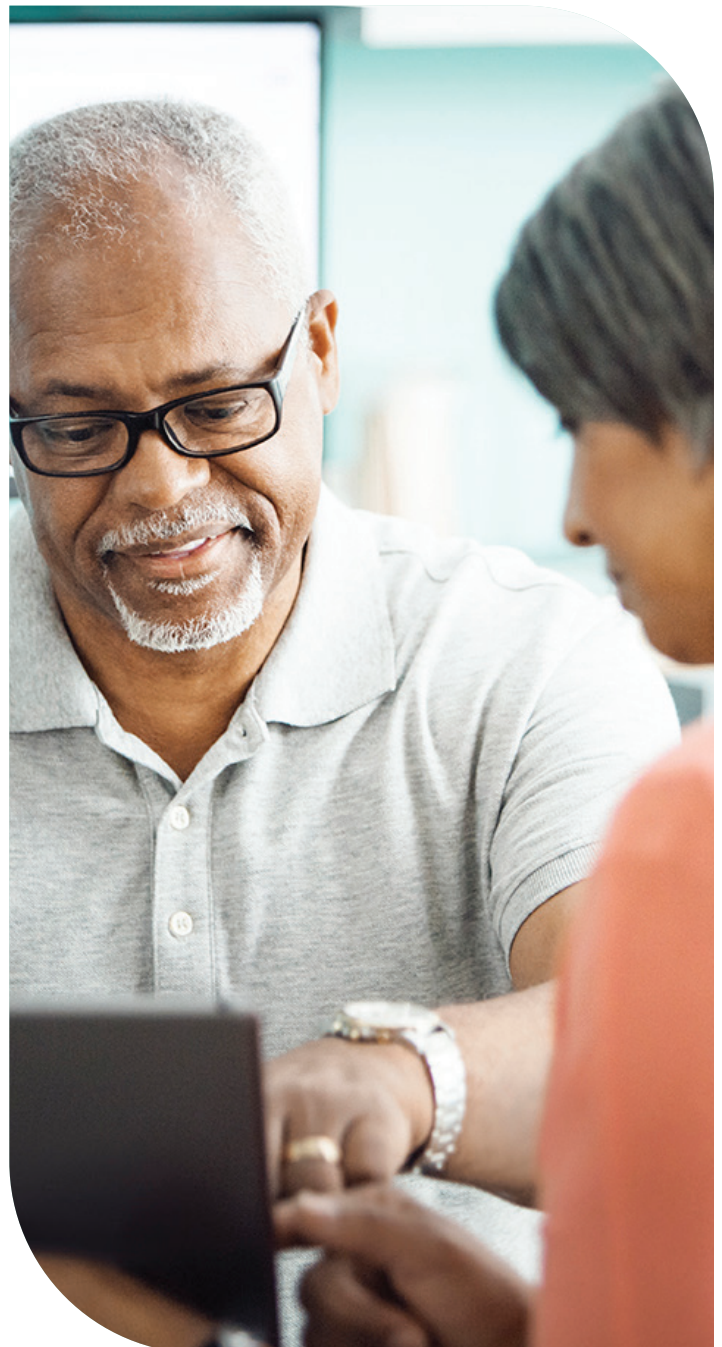
CKD usually has no early symptoms.

When someone has early stage CKD, they may feel completely fine. By the time noticeable symptoms like fatigue, swelling, or changes in urination appear, kidney disease may be more advanced. Regular check-ins with a doctor and routine lab work are important to catch CKD early.



High blood pressure and diabetes are the leading causes of CKD.

High blood pressure and diabetes put a lot of stress on the kidneys. These conditions can damage the kidneys over time by harming blood vessels and reducing how well the kidneys filter waste and fluid. Managing blood sugar and blood pressure, along with healthy habits, can help slow kidney damage.





Your daily choices can help keep your kidneys healthy.

What you eat, whether you are staying active or smoke, how much alcohol you drink, and how well you sleep can all affect your kidneys. Follow these tips:

- **Eat a balanced diet and stay active.** Taking control of what you eat and exercising regularly can help slow CKD and prevent more health problems. A kidney-friendly diet includes fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy proteins, and grains. Some people with later stage CKD may need to monitor sodium, protein, phosphorus, or potassium. Moderate activities like brisk walking, biking, swimming, gardening, or even housework can be good ways to stay active.
- **Quit tobacco/smoking,** which speeds up kidney damage and raises your risk of diabetes along with many other health problems. Tobacco use harms blood vessels throughout the body, which can worsen kidney disease and raise the risk of heart problems, diabetes complications, and kidney failure. Quitting tobacco can help protect your health, and support from your care team, medications, and counseling can make it easier.

- **Limit alcohol.** Alcohol negatively affects health in many ways, including making it harder for your body to manage fluids and minerals. Alcohol can stress the kidneys and affect blood pressure, blood sugar, hydration, medications, and other parts of your health, including your liver.
- **Get help if you have sleep apnea.** Heavy snoring or pauses in breathing can lower oxygen levels and put stress on the heart, kidneys, and other organs. Treating it can improve sleep and energy and may also help protect kidney health over time.



See a kidney doctor

Seeing a kidney doctor (nephrologist) at least once is also a smart step. A nephrologist specializes in kidney health and plays an important role in creating a personalized care plan with your other doctors. They help manage treatment, monitor your labs, answer questions, and guide you on lifestyle changes and next steps if more advanced care is needed. The more you learn, the better equipped you will be to take control of your kidney health.



Looking for more support?

Reach out to our care team. They can help answer your questions about kidney health and create the best plan for you.