



Ontario Renal Network

Let's talk about

Chronic Kidney Disease



What do the kidneys do?

Kidneys are important for your health. They:

- Remove wastes from the blood and return the cleaned blood back to the body
- Keep the volume of water and salt in the body constant
- Control blood pressure
- Promote the making of red blood cells
- Maintain vitamin levels, to preserve bone health

What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

A diagnosis of chronic kidney disease (CKD) means the kidneys have not been working properly to remove waste and excess fluids from the body for at least 3 months.

What causes CKD?

CKD is caused by many different conditions. The two main causes of chronic kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure, which are responsible for up to two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of cases. CKD can also result from a blockage of urine from the kidneys, injury or drugs (for example, drugs used to treat cancer).

Who is *most* at risk for chronic kidney disease?

You may be at high risk for CKD if you:

- Have diabetes
- Have high blood pressure
- Have a family history of CKD
- Are older than 60 years
- Have a certain ethnic background, such as First Nations (Indigenous)

Can CKD be prevented?

Even if you are at high risk for developing CKD, you can take steps to keep your kidneys as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

- Eat a healthy diet
- Be active (at least 30 minutes a day)
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Limit alcohol use
- Don't smoke or use tobacco
- Keep your blood sugar and blood pressure under control
- Take medications as directed
- Get annual check-ups

How do I find out if I have chronic kidney disease?

Talk to your doctor or nurse about your risks for CKD. A simple urine or blood test will show how well your kidneys are functioning.

If you do have CKD, it is important to find out as early as possible. People with CKD will eventually need dialysis or a kidney transplant. But you can improve your odds by taking care of your kidneys now.

Early treatment can help keep your kidneys working as long as possible. This treatment may include special drugs prescribed by your doctor. A dietitian may also suggest a special diet for you to follow.



Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, talk to your doctor or nurse. They will be able to provide this information or can contact a specialist in chronic kidney disease.