



TAKE CHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

CARING FOR YOUR KIDNEYS

Your kidneys are small but vital organs in your body. They are two bean-shaped organs about the size of your fist. They sit below the rib cage on each side of the body. Kidneys filter blood and they remove waste products and water to make urine. Believe it or not, they filter about a half cup of blood every minute!

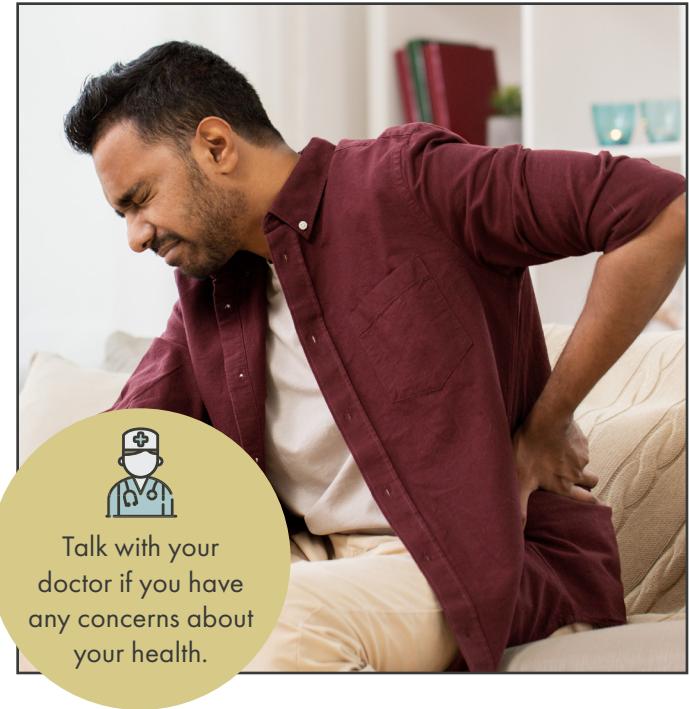
Chronic (long-term) kidney disease damages your kidneys so that they can't filter blood properly. Kidney disease is common. Certain people are at higher risk. Diabetes is the leading cause. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) almost one in three people with diabetes has chronic kidney disease. You're also at greater risk for kidney disease if you have high blood pressure or heart disease.

PROTECT YOUR KIDNEYS

You can take steps to protect your kidneys. Much of what you would do to maintain a healthy lifestyle also help maintain healthy kidneys:

Eat fruits and veggies and minimize consumption of added sugar and salt. Try to include fruits and vegetables at every meal and cut back on salt and added sugars. Aim for less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. Try to have less than 10 percent of your daily calories come from added sugars.

Try to be active every day. Aim to be active for 30 minutes or more on most days. If you are not active now, ask your health care provider about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you.



Work with your health care provider if you're overweight. If you are overweight or obese work with your health care provider or dietitian to identify a healthy weight and create a realistic weight-loss plan.

Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Try to maintain a solid sleep schedule in which you go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day.

If you smoke or use other tobacco products, stop. Ask for help so you don't have to do it alone.

Limit alcohol. If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink per day if you are a woman and two drinks per day if you are a man.

WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

During your next medical visit, you may want to ask your health care provider about your kidney health. Early kidney disease may not have any symptoms, so

getting tested may be the only way to know your kidneys are healthy. Your health care provider will help decide how often you should be tested.

KEY KIDNEY QUESTIONS

Ask your health care provider the following key questions about your kidney health during your next medical visit. The sooner you know you have kidney disease, the sooner you can get treatment to help protect your kidneys.

- » What should I do to keep my kidneys healthy?
- » Do I need to be taking different medicines?
- » Should I be more physically active?
- » What kind of physical activity can I do?
- » What can I eat?
- » Am I at a healthy weight?
- » Do I need to talk with a dietitian to get help with meal planning?
- » Should I be taking ACE inhibitors or ARBs for my kidneys?

