

Frequently Asked Questions

Kidney Education

Q: What helps kidneys remain healthy?

A: Healthy diet, exercise, good self-management of other chronic illnesses that are associated with kidney disease:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Heart disease

Q: Does cranberry juice help prevent kidneys?

A: Cranberry juice may help prevent UTIs (urinary tract infections). Drinking water can help prevent some kinds of kidney stones from developing.

Q: What are symptoms of unhealthy kidneys?

A: Symptoms are subtle but can include:

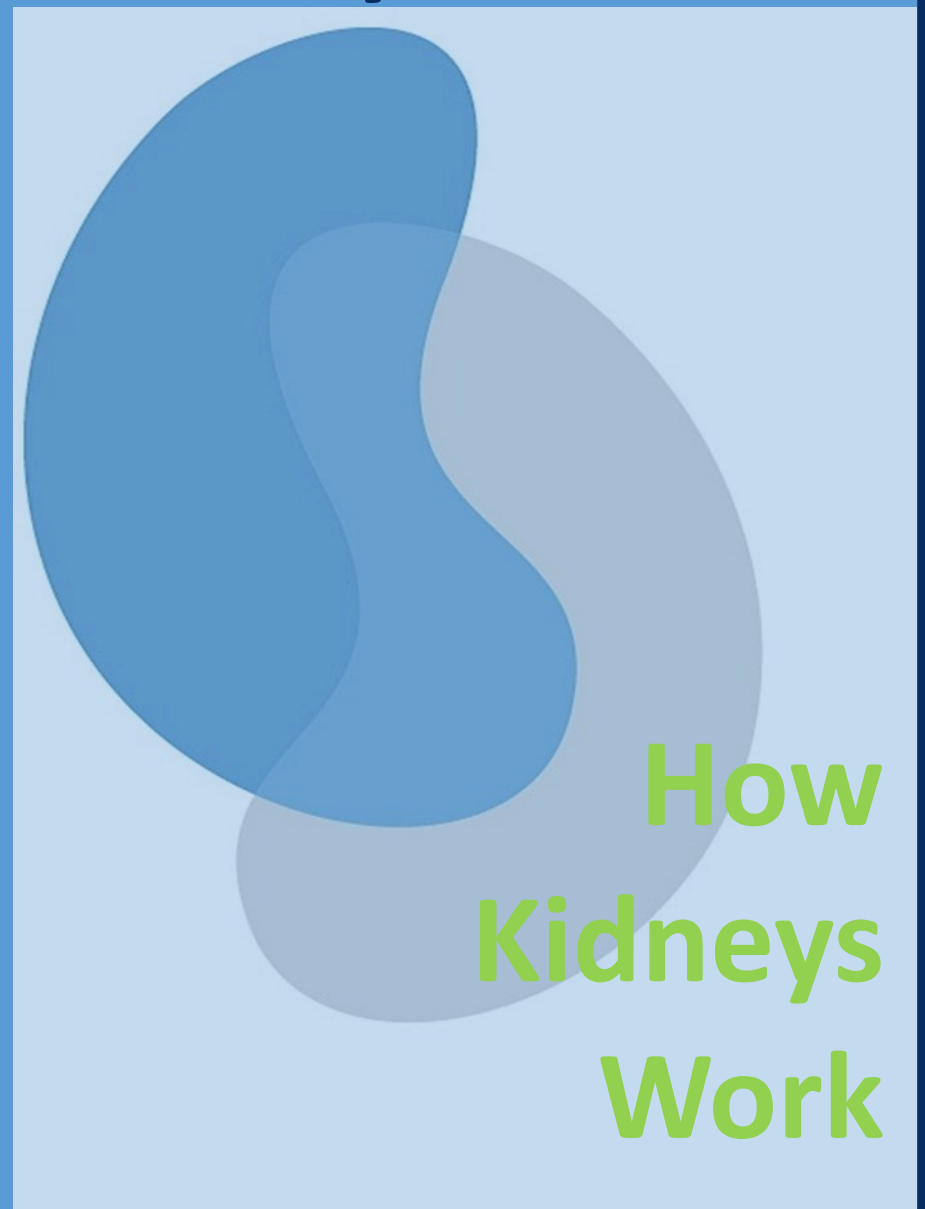
- Feeling tired
- Changes in how often you urinate (pee)
- Changes in urine's appearance or amount
- Swelling of mid-section or legs or ankles

Q: What happens when kidneys stop working?

A: When kidneys stop working it is called End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). There are three treatment choices to replace the kidney's important work: hemodialysis (HD), peritoneal dialysis (PD), and kidney transplant. The fourth option is no treatment.

Q: What is a nephrologist?

A: A nephrologist (nef-rol-o-gist) is a doctor who is trained to provide care to people with kidney disease.



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER

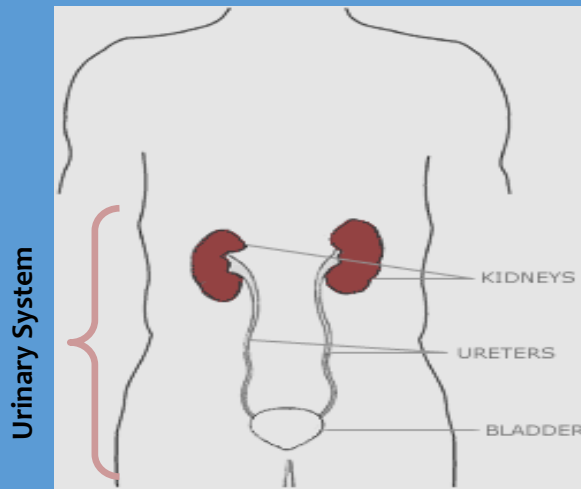
HEY DOC, HOW ARE MY KIDNEYS?®
Kidney Education Outreach Program



Kidney Location and Function

Where are the kidneys located?

- ◆ Most people have 2 kidneys located on either side of the spine, just below the rib cage
- ◆ Kidneys are part of the urinary tract



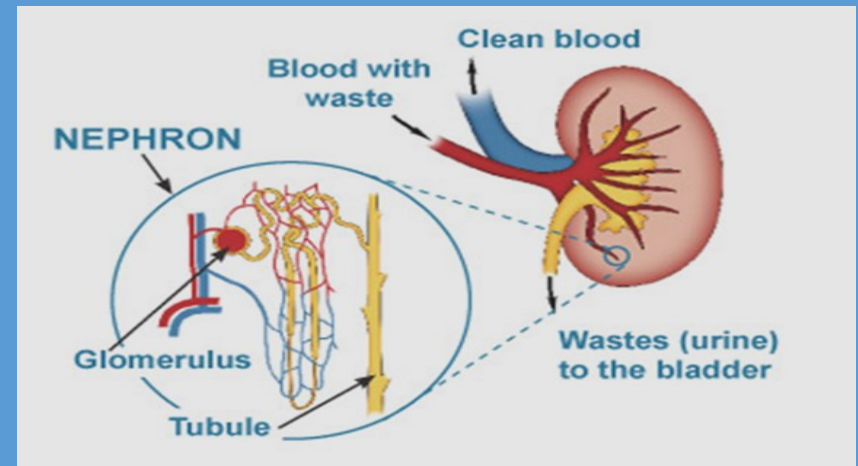
What do healthy kidneys do?

- ◆ Remove waste and extra fluid from blood (via urine)
- ◆ Balance chemicals and fluid in the body
- ◆ Help to control blood pressure
- ◆ Make red blood cells

How Kidneys Work

How do the kidneys work?

- ◆ The body changes food into energy to keep healthy
- ◆ After taking what is needed from food, the leftovers (waste) are released to the blood
- ◆ Each kidney has about 1 million nephrons
- ◆ Each nephron contains a glomerulus and tubule that filter the blood, keeping what is needed of the following: potassium, sodium, phosphorous



- ◆ The rest becomes waste
- ◆ Waste leaves the body and enters the urinary system as urine
- ◆ Waste that is not removed stays in the blood and can make a person sick