



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Amy Mottl

Diabetic Kidney Disease

“Diabetic Kidney Disease: What are the symptoms?”

Patient: What are the symptoms of this disease?

Dr Mottl: The symptoms of having diabetes are frequent urination and increased thirst. The reason for this is when the blood sugar is elevated above 200, this then overwhelms the kidney’s ability to hold onto the sugar on the blood side of the filtration units of the kidney. So the sugar then spills over into the urine and drags along with it excess water, causing increased urination.

Because more of the body’s fluids are lost into the urine, this makes people more thirsty, so they drink a lot more. This is a symptom of having high blood sugar, but then later on as people develop kidney disease and their kidney disease worsens with decreased filtration of the body’s waste products, then the damage resulting in the kidneys causes the kidneys to have trouble doing what their usual jobs are.

As a result, the kidneys aren’t able to hold onto the extra fluid when the body needs to, such as when people are exercising or aren’t drinking as much. There again, because of the kidney disease and not so much because of the diabetes itself, people will experience frequent urination.

So often times, my patients who have fairly advanced kidney disease will find that they continue to urinate quite normally or actually have increased urination and this does not necessarily reflect that their kidneys are working properly, but actually the opposite of that; is that they’re not able to hold onto the fluid when they need to.