CKD Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How is CKD diagnosed?

A: Doctors look at two factors: the presence of protein in the urine and a measure of kidney function called the glomerular filtration rate (GFR). The lower the GFR, the poorer the kidney function. A decrease in kidney function occurs with aging, as well.

Q: If I have chronic kidney disease, will I need dialysis or a transplant?

A: Patients begin dialysis *only when they reach Stage 5 of chronic kidney disease*, the condition known as end-stage renal disease or kidney failure. Kidney transplantation (preemptive) can occur before kidneys fail, but most transplants occur after dialysis is begun.

Q: Can CKD be treated?

Yes. Lost kidney function cannot usually be recovered, but the disease can be managed and, in many cases, prevented from getting worse through lifestyle changes and medication.

Q: How does my A1C score (test to measure long-term blood glucose for persons with diabetes) relate to my kidney function?

A: The A1C should be less than 7.0 percent in order to protect kidney function.

Q: How is blood pressure affected by CKD?

A: There are two ways that high blood pressure and kidney function can be related: 1) Low kidney function can cause high blood pressure or 2) if blood pressure is not in a normal range, kidney function can be reduced. The blood pressure goal for a person with CKD is below 130/80 mmHg.

Q: Is alcohol or soda bad for the kidneys?

In moderate amounts, alcohol and soda are not bad for the kidneys. But, both affect the kidneys indirectly. Alcohol and soda are high in calories, and too much of them are not good for anyone with diabetes. Diabetes is the number one cause of kidney failure.

HEY DOC, HOW ARE MY KIDNEYS? ®

Kidney Education Outreach Program

Kidney Education

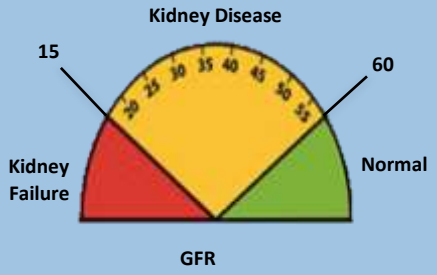
Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

UNC KIDNEY CENTER

CKD is Common, Harmful and Treatable

It is estimated that 26 million Americans have chronic kidney disease (CKD), the gradual loss of kidney function. In North Carolina, 1 in every 9 persons has CKD. There are 5 stages of CKD and stage 5 is often called end-stage kidney disease (ESKD).

The **glomerular filtration rate (GFR)** is the best number to know how well a person's kidneys are working. It represents the percentage of kidney function. For example, a GFR of 30 suggests that the kidneys are working at 30 percent of normal level.



GFR score of 60 or higher is a normal score
GFR score below 60 may mean kidney disease
GFR score of 15 or lower may mean kidney failure

How do healthy kidneys work?

- Blood, water and waste enter the kidney through the **renal artery** to be filtered
- Filtered blood and water leave the kidney through the **renal vein**
- After being filtered, extra water and waste are called urine and exit the kidney through the **ureter**

What Causes CKD?

What are the most common causes of CKD?

Diabetes (high sugar) is the most common cause of CKD. Diabetes results from problems converting sugars from food (carbohydrates) into energy (insulin) in one of the following ways:

- too little insulin in the body (Type 1 diabetes), or
- the body is not able to use insulin (Type 2 diabetes).

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is the second leading cause of kidney failure. Blood pressure beyond the normal range (greater than 120/80) makes the heart work harder and can damage blood vessels.

Cardiovascular (heart or blood vessel) disease is another risk for developing kidney disease and kidney disease increases a person's risk for heart disease.

A family history of kidney disease. Kidney disease tends to run in families. The presence of the associated risk factors described above help to explain the increased risk for CKD among family.

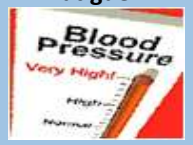
Common Symptoms of CKD


Fatigue


Metallic Taste


Itching


Puffy eyes



High blood pressure


Urinate more/less often



Changes in how the urine looks