

Kidney health information



Our web-based kidney health information offers a wide range of information on kidney disease and treatments for kidney patients, their families and carers, as well as medical professionals and researchers.

Kidney health check

Find out your level of risk by taking part in our free kidney health check online.

Kidney information and kidney conditions

This section covers all aspects of kidney disease with information on treatments and lifestyle.

Treatments and management

Detailed information and guidance on the treatment options available, along with how to manage your condition.

Kidney patient stories

Kidney disease can affect anyone of any age, including children. Some people are born with the condition, whilst others only discover years down the line that their kidneys have failed. Read stories about people who have lived first hand with the disease.

Frequently asked kidney health questions

Have a kidney health question you need answering? Our FAQs page has a range of questions and answers that may help.

Further resources

Here we have a host of additional resources to download or order. The selection of leaflets contain information for both the healthcare professional and the patient.

To access all the information mentioned above visit:

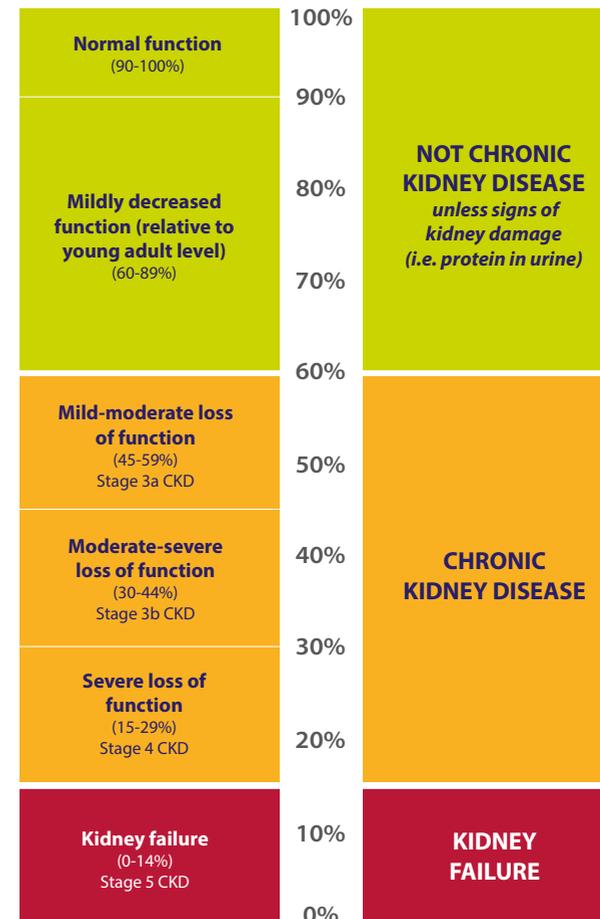
www.kidneyresearchuk.org/health-information
Call: 0300 303 1100 or email: kidneyhealth@kidneyresearchuk.org

The website is not intended to provide personal medical advice, or act as a substitute for the advice of your doctor. If you have any questions or concerns about kidney health matters please consult a medical health professional. Always seek such advice before taking, or deciding not to take, any action as a result of information gathered from the Kidney Health Information website.

Stages of kidney disease

Some people find it useful to think of kidney function as a percentage, going from 100% (fully functioning) to 0% (no function). However, it is important to remember that kidney function varies in different people. Above 60% is usually regarded as normal unless there are other signs of kidney damage (e.g. protein in your urine).

If your kidney function starts decreasing below 60%, (or you have other signs of kidney damage) you may need different treatments to manage your kidney disease and symptoms.



In all stages of kidney disease your doctor will regularly test your urine for protein and measure your eGFR by a blood test (see further details overleaf). This is to find out how serious the condition is and whether it is getting worse.

Who we are

Kidney disease is a silent killer. There is no cure. There are **three million** people in the UK with it right now and the number of people with kidney failure continues to rise.

We are the UK's leading kidney research charity and we believe that everybody has a right to a life free of kidney disease. We are pioneers in our field. For decades our developments in treatments, better information for patients and raising vital public awareness have been saving lives. Today, our work is more essential than ever.

We are Kidney Research UK.

We can only produce information like this thanks to our generous supporters, text to donate now or call our donation line on 0300 303 1100



www.kidneyresearchuk.org

T: 0300 303 1100

Kidney Research UK, Nene Hall, Lynch Wood Park, Peterborough PE2 6FZ

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* Text to donate, you will be charged £3, plus one message at your standard network rate. A minimum of £2.97 depending on your service provider, will be received by Kidney Research UK. If you have any questions please call 0300 303 1100.

Are your kidneys OK?

Chronic kidney disease affects 1 in 10 people in the UK

What is kidney disease?
What are the symptoms?

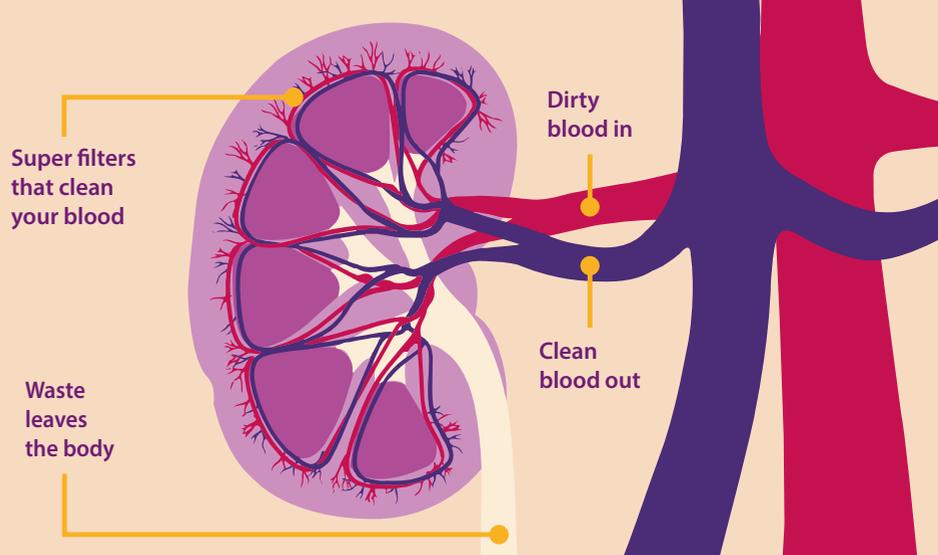
Kidney Research UK
Funding research to save lives

Why are your kidneys so important?

They keep the whole body healthy and working...from the heart and skin, to the bones and digestive system.

They clean all your blood 40 times per day. They also regulate your blood pressure.

It's the most amazing organ in the human body!



What is kidney disease?

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a term used by healthcare professionals when your kidneys are not working as well as they should. The kidneys clean the blood and remove excess water. The waste products then leave the body, via the bladder, as urine. If the kidneys are not working properly then the waste products can build up and your organs and tissues begin to be harmed.

Another sign of kidney disease is when the kidneys leak protein into the urine.

Because the kidneys are so efficient it is usually a long time before there are obvious signs that something is wrong. Depending on the problem, early diagnosis and treatment can help slow down any damage to the kidneys. Left unchecked, however, some people go on to develop kidney failure, which is fatal without treatment by dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Research suggests that around three million people in the UK have mild to severe kidney disease (sometimes described as stage 3-5 CKD). But up to one million of these people are undiagnosed.

Kidney disease can affect **anyone** at **any age**.



FACT

Your kidneys are amazing, they filter around **180 litres of blood** every day!



Am I at risk of kidney disease?

Although kidney disease can affect anyone at any age, there are a few things that increase your risk:

- Diabetes*
- High blood pressure*
- Cardiovascular (heart) disease
- Family history of kidney disease
- People from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

*it is more common if your blood pressure or diabetes haven't been as well controlled as they should be.

Other less common causes include inflammation (glomerulonephritis) or infection (pyelonephritis). Sometimes kidney disease is inherited or the result of a longstanding blockage such as an enlarged prostate or kidney stones. Some drugs can cause kidney disease, especially certain pain-killing drugs (e.g. ibuprofen) if taken over a long time. Often it isn't possible to say what has caused the problem.

What are the symptoms?

In most people, early stage kidney disease does not cause any obvious symptoms. Sometimes there are none at all until a few weeks before dialysis is needed. Symptoms that can occur in the later stages are:



Itchy skin



Feeling tired



Feeling sick



Finding it difficult to concentrate



Unusually breathless upon exertion



Poor appetite and weight loss

How do I find out if I have kidney disease?

Both blood and urine tests are used to diagnose kidney disease. A blood test called eGFR (estimated glomerular filtration rate) indicates roughly how well the kidneys are working to filter out waste from your blood and is often shown as a percentage of normal. A simple urine test or ACR (albumin to creatinine ratio) is performed to look for signs that protein is leaking into the urine. This is an important sign of kidney damage.

Why are blood and urine tests so important?

Kidney disease is a 'silent' disease because it displays few symptoms at early stages. However if kidney disease is caught early, medications and lifestyle changes can slow its progress and even stop or reverse kidney disease, depending on its cause.

What can I do to help myself?



Keep your **weight** down



Don't **smoke**



Take regular **exercise**



Keep your **blood pressure** in check



Avoid excess **salt and alcohol**

Still worried?

Take our kidney health check:

www.kidneyresearchuk.org/kidney-health-check

Ask your doctor to:

- Provide information to help you understand kidney disease
- Work with you to manage high blood pressure and diabetes
- Monitor your kidney function with regular blood and urine tests
- Check that the doses of your medicines don't need to be adjusted because of your kidneys
- Review your medication if you are unwell, as sometimes short-term changes to particular blood pressure tablets need to be made

FACT

Three million people in the UK have mild to severe kidney disease (stage 3-5 CKD)

