

Kidney Disease

Kidney disease is the inability of the kidneys to perform their normal functions.

What to look for

- Frequent thirst and urge to urinate.
- The passing of very small amounts of urine.
- Swelling of the hands and feet, and puffiness around the eyes.
- Unpleasant taste in the mouth and urine like odour to the breath.
- Persistent fatigue or shortness of breath.
- Loss of appetite.
- Increasingly higher blood pressure.
- Pale skin.
- Excessively dry, persistently itchy skin.
- In children: increased fatigue and sleepiness; decrease in appetite; and eventually, poor growth.

The kidneys perform a vital function for the human body. They cleanse the blood, maintain the correct balance of various body chemicals, and help regulate blood pressure.

When the kidneys become diseased or damaged, they can suddenly or gradually lose their ability to perform these vital functions. Waste products and excess fluid then build up inside the body, causing a variety of symptoms. It is essential that kidneys in this state are treated.

Causes

The causes of chronic kidney disease (the slow, gradual impairment of the organs) are usually the result of another disease such as [diabetes](#), [High blood pressure](#) or Atherosclerosis, or [Lupus](#) may also trigger kidney disease by causing the kidneys to become inflamed.

Some chronic kidney diseases are inherited. Others are congenital, meaning something the person was born with that makes the victim susceptible to kidney diseases.

If you habitually take medications or drugs (including illegal drugs) you may also contract this disease. Researchers also suspect that excessive amounts of [vitamin D](#) and protein may harm the kidneys. But in many chronic cases, the precise cause remains unknown.

Acute kidney disease (kidney disease that develops suddenly) can occur immediately following the onset of any medical condition that suddenly and dramatically reduces the flow of blood to the kidneys. Examples are a heart attack, a traumatic injury, a serious infection, or a toxic reaction to a drug.

Inhaling or swallowing certain toxins, including methyl, or wood, alcohol; carbon tetrachloride; antifreeze; and poisonous mushrooms, can also cause the kidneys to suddenly malfunction. Marathon runners and other endurance athletes who do not drink enough liquids while competing in long-distance athletic events may suffer acute kidney failure due to a sudden breakdown of muscle tissue, which releases a chemical called myoglobin that can damage the kidneys.

You will need to undergo a blood and urine test and/or other tests at your doctors surgery.

Traditional Treatment

It is imperative that you seek conventional medical advice with kidney complaints as they can be fatal. Alternative therapies should only be used as supplement to your traditional treatment.

Medications can sometimes help slow the progress of chronic kidney disease also certain diets may halt the disease. But if these measures fail, and the kidneys may worsen to the point where they are totally dysfunctional. There are then only two treatments: dialysis, in which artificial devices clean the blood of waste products, or a kidney transplant.

If you are diagnosed with one of the more serious forms of kidney disease, your doctor may prescribe several medications.

Your doctor may also prescribe an [iron](#) and a [calcium](#) supplement if those levels have fallen in your blood.

Always consult your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications as these can have a worsening effect on your kidneys.

Restrictive diets which avoid protein can often have very positive affects on the kidneys however; this approach is still very controversial in medical circles.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Kidney disease is a serious disease therefore you should bear in mind that alternative therapies are only a supplement to your traditional treatment. You should also talk over with your doctor before starting any other supplements or medication as these can have a profound effect on your kidneys.

Chinese Herbs – Traditional Chinese health practitioners use several herbs in the treatment of kidney disorders. However, because many herbs can be harmful to the kidneys, you should always consult your physician before taking the advice of an herbalist or ingesting any herbal remedies.

Homoeopathy – Homoeopathic remedies are generally safe for the treatment of chronic kidney conditions. Homoeopathic remedies are generally safe for the treatment of chronic kidney conditions.

Dietary Considerations

A special restricted diet can decrease the workload on diseased kidneys, keep body fluids and chemicals in balance, and avoid a build-up of waste products in the body. These diets are individualised for each patient but they are usually centred around the reduction of protein, [potassium](#), [phosphorus](#) and [sodium](#). It is very important to drink lots of filtered water. Foods which should be avoided are cocoa, tea, rhubarb, beets, parsley.

[Calcium](#) supplements are frequently recommended in order to counteract the bone weakening that frequently accompanies kidney disease.

Chemicals That Can Damage The Kidneys

Several of the chemicals found in common household products have been linked to both acute and chronic kidney disease. By becoming aware and reading the labels on all products in the home you can also avoid exposure to these.

Cadmium – (used in production of) pesticides, rubber tyres, plastics, paints, and other products. Because of its industrial uses, it is now widely found in water and food supplies.

Carbon tetrachloride

Chloroform – This chemical can be found in drinking water as a by-product of chlorination and found in the air as the result of automobile and industrial pollution. Chloroform is also still used as an ingredient in some cough syrups, toothpaste, liniments, glues, pesticides, and other consumer products.

Ethylene glycol

Oxalic acid -found in some heavy-duty household cleaning products. Several freckle-fading and skin-bleaching cosmetics contain this chemical. -found in some heavy-duty household cleaning products. Several freckle-fading and skin-bleaching cosmetics contain this chemical.

Tetrachloroethylene – dry cleaning fluid dry cleaning fluid

When to seek further professional advice

- You are experiencing any of the symptoms listed in the description section.