



Chronic Kidney Disease

What is it?

Your kidneys filter the blood in your body, removing waste products that can harm your organs. If your kidneys stop working as well as they could, your blood is not filtered properly and this can affect your health. There are many reasons this might happen.

Chronic kidney disease is when your kidneys are no longer working as they should and they are unlikely to improve. However, it is important to protect your kidneys from getting worse. If they do and your kidneys can no longer do their job, you may need dialysis or a transplant.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will develop a plan for your treatment which will involve:

- Recommending changes to your lifestyle, such as diet and regular activity
- Prescribing medication if necessary
- Adjusting other medications you take if needed
- Referring you to a specialist if necessary

If your condition is more serious or complicated, your GP will refer you to a kidney specialist (nephrologist).

What will my GP do in the future?

People with chronic kidney disease need to be monitored and treated for the rest of their lives so your GP will want to see you regularly.

At your follow-up visits your GP may:

- Check your blood pressure
- Do a kidney health check (usually blood and urine test)
- Adjust medication if necessary
- Check how you are going with changes to your lifestyle
- Refer you to a specialist, if your kidney function worsens

What can I do?

There are many things you can do to protect your kidneys from getting worse. including:

- **Keep GP appointments** – even if you feel well; kidney disease is often ‘silent’, meaning you may not feel unwell even when your disease is getting worse
- **Stay active** – regular exercise as directed by your GP
- **Eat a healthy diet** – including plenty of fruit and vegetables, and a lower salt intake
- **Drink plenty of water** – avoid sugary drinks and limit alcoholic drinks
- **Stop smoking** – call the Quitline (13 7848) or ask your doctor for help with quitting
- **Have your blood pressure checked regularly** – a pharmacist can also do this for you
- **Do things that help you relax** – to help reduce your stress levels
- **Tell your doctor about any medicines you take** – including those you buy from the supermarket, pharmacy or health-food store

Medications and Your kidneys

Many medicines can affect the kidneys, such as blood pressure drugs and anti-inflammatories

Some medicines which leave the body through the kidneys may need to have their dose adjusted

Your GP may need to change the medicines you take, or adjust the dosage

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What supports are available?

South Western Sydney Local Health District Nephrology Clinics provide specialist kidney care. There are clinics at Bankstown, Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool hospitals.

The units have kidney specialists (nephrologists) as well as:

- Patient education
- Pre-dialysis care and dialysis services
- Transplant management
- Clinical trials
- Mental health support (clinical psychology)
- Nutrition support (dietetics)

Your GP may also refer you to a private nephrologist (kidney specialist).

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How can I protect my kidney health?*
- What medication(s) do I need to take?*
- What are the symptoms of chronic kidney disease?*
- Do I need to avoid taking anything?*
- Am I at risk of other complications?*



Where can I learn more?

Kidney Health Australia has more than 40 factsheets for people with chronic kidney disease. Topics include:

- **All about chronic kidney disease**
- **Looking after yourself with chronic kidney disease**
- **eGFR**
- **How to look after your kidneys**
- **Back on the Menu**
- **Indigenous resources**

Visit kidney.org.au to learn more.

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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