

Acute Kidney Injury

What is it?

Acute kidney injury is a form of kidney damage that occurs quickly, over a few hours to a few days. It affects kidney function, making it hard for the kidneys to filter waste from the blood.

Common signs include swelling, going to the toilet less than normal, shortness of breath, nausea and fatigue. An acute kidney injury is more common in people who are very ill, have a kidney condition, have a chronic disease or are aged over 65. Treatments include further tests, fluids, medication and sometimes dialysis.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP may try to find the cause of the acute kidney injury and treat it. They may need to refer you to a specialist. They may also:

- Take tests to check your kidney function, such as blood and urine tests
- Review your medication
- Check your fluid levels
- Check your blood pressure

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will see you again in two to three days to check your blood pressure, kidney function and fluid levels. They will take blood tests and urine tests to check your kidney health. Your kidney function will often return to normal within one to two weeks if the cause is found. It may take up to eight weeks to fully improve.

Your GP may refer you to a specialist, called a nephrologist, if:

- Your treatment is not having any effect
- You develop complications
- You have an advanced stage of kidney disease and may need dialysis

Once you have been treated, your GP may see you once a year for a kidney health check. If you do see a nephrologist, your GP may stay up to date with your progress and help manage your health.

What can I do?

After you have recovered, your GP may suggest you change your diet to support your kidney health. Follow your GP's advice about healthy eating. Ask your GP about seeing a dietitian who can help check your diet and advise you about which foods to eat and avoid. General kidney health tips include:

- Avoid foods high in salt
- Limit the amount of salt you add to your foods
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol
- Drink plenty of water (at least two litres every day)

There are some foods to avoid if you have kidney problems. Your GP can give you more advice about this. Living a healthy life helps you to reduce your risk factors.

Be sure to eat a healthy diet and keep your blood pressure within the normal range. Maintain a healthy weight, get eight hours of sleep each night and reduce stress levels.

Talk to your GP about how often you should have check-ups after you get better. Ask your GP what you should do if you start feeling worse.

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What supports are available?

South Western Sydney Local Health District Nephrology Clinics

Your GP may refer you to a nephrology clinic for specialist care. The clinics are at Bankstown, Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool hospitals. These clinics work in many ways to help manage kidney disease. The units have specialist nephrologists as well as:

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

Private nephrologists are also an option. Ask your GP to refer you.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How can I protect my kidneys?
- Do I need to avoid any foods or drinks?
- What medication(s) do I need to take?
- How often should I see you for a follow-up?
- Am I at risk of chronic kidney disease?
- How long will it take for me to improve?



Where can I learn more?

- **Kidney Health Australia** – Acute Kidney Injury: kidney.org.au

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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