

LEARN ABOUT

UNDERSTANDING CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

CKD occurs when kidneys are damaged and cannot effectively filter blood. This can lead to a buildup of waste and fluid in the body, which may cause illness such as:

- Heart problems
- Anemia (low red blood cell count)
- Increased risk of infections
- Imbalances in calcium, potassium, or phosphorus
- Poor appetite or reduced food intake
- Sadness or decreased quality of life

Who Can Get CKD?

CKD can progress over time if not managed. The only way to know if you have CKD is through blood and urine tests. You are more likely to develop CKD if you have:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Are over 60 years old
- A family history of CKD or kidney failure
- A previous kidney injury

How to Lower Your Risk of CKD

You can take steps to protect your kidneys:

- Keep your blood pressure within a healthy range below 140/90 or as recommended by your doctor).
- If you have diabetes, maintain your blood sugar in a healthy range.
- Stay physically active and maintain a healthy weight.
- Get tested for CKD if you are at risk.
- Follow a kidney-friendly diet, your doctor or dietitian can provide guidance.
- Take prescribed medications as directed.
- If you smoke, consider quitting.
- Consult a kidney specialist (nephrologist) for expert care and guidance.

How Do Doctors Test for CKD?

Doctors use two simple tests to evaluate kidney health:

- Blood test (eGFR): Measures how well your kidneys are filtering waste.
- Urine test (uACR): Checks for protein in your urine.

These tests help doctors determine the health and function of your kidneys.