

Chronic kidney disease and renal failure

Often the development of kidney disease is gradual and kidney function worsens over a number of years. If you permanently lose more than one-third of your kidney function, it is called 'chronic kidney disease'. Chronic kidney disease can lead to kidney failure. You are more at risk of chronic kidney disease if you:

- Have diabetes
- Have high blood pressure
- Are obese
- Are over 50 years of age
- Have a family history of kidney disease
- Smoke – **men** who smoke are three times more likely to have reduced kidney function

The risk of chronic kidney disease resulting in kidney failure depends on your level of kidney damage. Glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidney filters or glomeruli) and diabetes are the main causes of kidney failure in Australia.

Lifestyle changes can keep your kidneys healthy

Diet aims - low protein, low potassium, phosphate and saturated fats slows progression:

- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables including legumes (peas or beans) and grain-based food like bread, pasta, noodles and rice.
- Eat some lean meat like chicken and fish each week.
- Eat only small amounts of salty or fatty food.
- Drink plenty of water instead of sugary drinks.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stay fit. Do at least 30 minutes of physical activity that increases your heart rate on five or more days of the week including walking, lawn mowing, bike riding, swimming or gentle aerobics.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit your alcohol to two small drinks per day if you are male or one small drink per day if you are female.
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly.
- Do things that help you relax and reduce your stress levels.

Medications: – some drugs such as lithium can cause kidney failure. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS eg. Nurofen, Voltaren), taken in normal therapeutic doses, may occasionally cause acute kidney failure. This possibility is more likely if you are also on a diuretic and/or certain Blood Pressure drugs (ACE & Angiotensin 2 inhibitor)

Helpful drugs include:

- Vitamin supplements: multi B + C (avoid fat soluble vitamins)
- Iron - supplement for increased loss
- Vitamin D (calcitriol) - helps regulate Calcium (suppresses secondary parathyroidism)
- Phosphate binders: Calcium carbonate (eg. Caltrate), help reduce acidosis

Other Drugs such as Statins, Vasodilators, ACE & Angiotensin 2 inhibitors may be recommended.

Further information:

Your doctor

Kidney Health Information Service Tel. 1800 682 531 or TTY 1800 005 881

Kidney Health Australia, formerly known as the Australian Kidney Foundation

<http://www.kidney.org.au/>