

**There are several ways to reduce the risk of developing (further) kidney disease.**

### **Keep fit, Be active**

This can help to maintain an ideal body weight, reduce your blood pressure and the risk of Chronic Kidney Disease.

### **Be careful when taking multivitamins, food supplements and herbal or complementary medicines**

Multivitamins, food supplements and herbal or complementary medicines may contain ingredients that are harmful to your kidneys. Always check with your pharmacist whether the medicines you are taking may interact with these.

### **Eat a healthy diet**

This can help to maintain an ideal body weight, reduce your blood pressure, prevent diabetes, heart disease and other conditions associated with Chronic Kidney Disease.

Reduce your salt intake. The recommended sodium intake is less than 6 grams of salt per day. This includes the salt already in your foods. (around a teaspoon). To reduce your salt intake, try and limit the amount of processed and restaurant food and do not add salt to food. It will be easier to control your salt intake if you prepare the food yourself with fresh ingredients.

If you already have severe decreased kidney function it might be best to discuss this with your health professional

### **Check and control your blood sugar**

About half of people who have diabetes do not know they have diabetes. Therefore, you need to check your blood sugar level as part of your general body checkup. This is especially important for those who are approaching middle age or older. About half of people who have diabetes develop kidney damage; but this can be prevented/ limited if the diabetes is well controlled. Check your kidney function regularly with blood and urine tests.

If you have diabetes, here are some steps you can take to reduce harm to your kidneys.

- Maintain your blood glucose targets as often as you can.
- Get tested for your average level of blood glucose over the past three months (HbA1C test). Get your test at least twice a year, but ideally up to four times a year.
- If your blood pressure is high, check it regularly and get it under control to make sure your kidneys stay healthy.
- Read more about diabetes

### **Check and control your blood pressure**

Having high blood pressure can damage blood vessels in your kidneys, reducing their ability to function properly. If the blood vessels in the kidneys are damaged, they may stop removing wastes and extra fluid from the body. Having extra fluid in your blood vessels may then raise your blood pressure even more, creating a dangerous cycle.

About half of people who have high blood pressure do not know they have high blood pressure. Therefore, you need to check your blood pressure as part of your general body checkup. This is especially important for those who are approaching middle age or older. High blood pressure can damage your kidneys. This is especially likely when associated with other factors like diabetes, high cholesterol and Cardio-Vascular Diseases. The risk can be reduced with good control of blood pressure.

Normal adult blood pressure should be <130/80. Hypertension is diagnosed if, when measured on two different days, the systolic blood pressure readings on both days is  $\geq 140$  mmHg and/or the diastolic blood pressure readings on both days is  $\geq 90$  mmHg .

If your blood pressure is persistently elevated above the normal range (especially if you are a young person), you should consult your doctor to discuss the risks, the need for lifestyle modification and medication treatment.

### **Take appropriate fluid intake**

The right level of fluid intake for any individual depends on many factors including exercise, climate, health conditions, pregnancy and breastfeeding and if you have already developed decreased kidney function

Normally this means 8 cups, approximately 2 liters per day for a healthy person in a comfortable climate condition. If you have severe known kidney disease please consult your health care professional for the right advice on the amount of fluid intake.

This needs to be adjusted when in severe climate condition. Your fluid intake may need to be adjusted if you have kidney or heart or liver disease. Consult your doctor on the appropriate fluid intake for your condition.

### **Avoid dehydration**

Dehydration is the loss of water and salts from your body. Drinking the right amount of fluid every day is an important part of kidney health.

### **Don't smoke**

Smoking slows the flow of blood to the kidneys. When less blood reaches the kidneys, it can decrease their ability to function normally. Smoking also increases the risk of kidney cancer by about 50 per cent.

### **Don't take over-the-counter anti-inflammatory/pain-killer pills regularly**

Common drugs such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS)/ pain-killer (e.g. drugs like ibuprofen) can harm the kidneys if taken regularly.

If you have decreased kidney function, taking just a few doses can do harm to your kidneys. If in doubt, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

### **Have a sick day plan**

Taking some medicines can increase your risk of getting acute kidney injury, especially if you take these medicines while you are dehydrated, or you take a combination of these medicines. If you are unwell and are unable to drink fluids properly, have a sick day plan. You may need to miss doses until you feel better. Check with your doctor and pharmacist whether the medicines you are taking put you at risk of Acute Kidney Injury and about having a sick day plan:

[https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/sick\\_day\\_rules.pdf](https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/sick_day_rules.pdf)

### **Get your kidney function checked if you have one or more of the 'high risk' factors**

You have diabetes

You have hypertension

You are obese

You have a family history of kidney disease

You are of Maori, Pacifica or South East Asian ethnicity

You are over 60 years old in combination with one or more risk factors

You have Heart Disease

You are a smoker

You have had previous kidney damage

**What is a kidney health check :**

Blood test: Creatinine and eGFR

Urine ACR

Blood pressure.

For more info regarding kidney numbers please check:

[https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/file/Know\\_your\\_KIDNEY\\_numbers.pdf](https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/file/Know_your_KIDNEY_numbers.pdf)

**How often?**

If chronic kidney disease **NOT** present: at least every 1-2 years

If chronic disease or diabetic: At least every 12 months. Depending on the “kidney numbers” this could be more frequent.