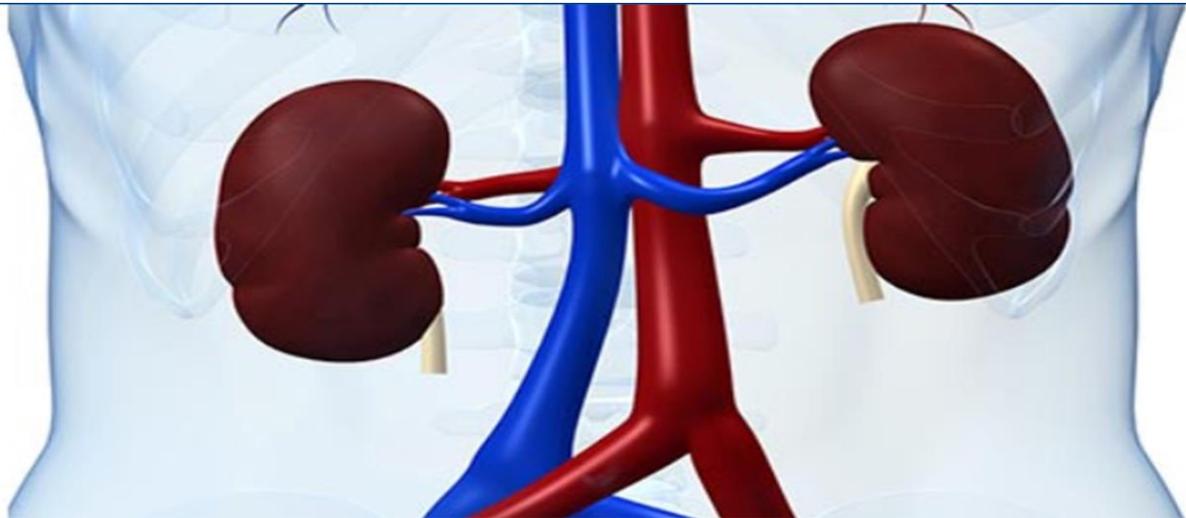


The kidneys and kidney disease



Where your kidneys are:

Your kidneys are located near the middle of your back, on either side of your backbone (spine). They are protected from physical injury by a large layer of fat, along with your lower ribs and back muscles.

They are bean-shaped and each one is the size of an adult fist (150 grams). Most people are born with two kidneys, but around one in every 750 people are born with just one. The good news is that you can still lead a healthy life with just one. One kidney alone can provide up to 75 per cent of normal kidney function.

Each kidney is made up of about one million tiny filters called nephrons. Blood enters your kidneys through the renal artery and goes back into your body by the renal vein.

The role of the kidneys:

The kidneys are very important, they clean your blood and create urine. Your kidneys have millions of tiny filters, called nephrons. Kidneys filter the waste and toxins from your blood. They get rid of water you don't need and hold on to water when you are dehydrated. The result is about one to two litres of urine that you pass each day, detoxifying your body. The kidneys also keep your blood pressure regular by telling the blood vessels in your body when to expand and contract.

Your kidneys also manage your body's production of Vitamin D, which is crucial for maintaining strong bones and producing red blood cells that carry oxygen around your body.

What causes kidney issues?

Kidneys can stop working properly for several reasons. Common causes include diabetes, high blood pressure, various forms of inflammation and many more reasons. If you have been diagnosed with *chronic kidney disease, ask your doctor for the reason.

**What is chronic kidney disease means that your kidneys are damaged in some ways. Chronic means long lasting.*

When the kidneys don't work

Blood tests and urine tests ordered by your doctor can find (early) kidney damage. When you have early kidney damage you will still feel fine and often you will not notice any symptoms. If kidney damage is found early you can still use it using healthy lifestyle changes and medication. Managing your health can stop or slow further kidney damage.

Chronic kidney disease is not usual curable. But if you find out early that you have a kidney problem there are several ways to slow down the disease. For more information see:

https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/What_you_can_do_for_your_kidne.pdf

These are the test to check how well the kidneys are working:

1. Blood test: eGFR stands for estimated glomerular filtration rate. It measures how much blood your kidneys filter each minute. If your kidneys are not working properly the eGFR will go down.

2. Urine test: A Urine test is done to check how much protein is in the urine. Leaking of protein from the kidneys is an early sign of kidney damage. The name of the urine test is called ACR, Albumin Creatinine Ratio

3: Blood pressure

Get your blood pressure checked by your doctor. High blood pressure can be caused by kidney disease or can cause kidney disease.

For more info on blood and urine tests see:

https://www.kidney.health.nz/resources/file/Know_your_KIDNEY_numbers.pdf