

What to ask your doctor:

If You Have Diabetes or High Blood Pressure

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or both, you may not know you are also at higher risk for kidney disease. Kidney disease is very serious and can change your entire life. In fact, 2 out of 3 people on dialysis are there because of diabetes or high blood pressure. But, this doesn't have to be you.

If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, there are things you can do to prevent kidney disease.

If your doctor has not talked to you about kidney disease, here is important information and some questions to ask your doctor.

Getting ready for your appointment

- Doctor visits sometimes go by very fast and are full of information. To make sure you have enough time for questions, let your doctor know at the start of the appointment what you'd like to ask.
- Don't feel embarrassed to ask a question if you are not sure what something means.
- Bring someone with you to the appointment to ask questions and offer support.
- Get a notebook and bring it with you to your visits. Write down answers to your questions.
- You may have questions that you don't even know to ask. Here are some starter questions to get the conversation going.

Questions to ask your doctor

- Why is kidney disease so serious?
- Am I too young to worry about kidney disease?
- Does early kidney disease have symptoms?
- What are the tests for kidney disease?



- Will you test my kidneys at every visit?
- How long does it take to get the test results back?
- If I feel ok, do I still need to keep coming to appointments?
- Besides diabetes and high blood pressure, what else could put me at risk for kidney disease?

If you have diabetes:

- What should my blood sugar (blood glucose) be?
- How often should I check my blood sugar?
- I knew I had to watch out for my eyes and feet. Do I need to think about my kidneys the same way?
- People in my family have diabetes and are on dialysis. Does that mean it will happen to me?
- Are there any medicines I can take for both my diabetes and my kidneys?
- Should I be seeing an endocrinologist? (See definition to the right.)

If you have high blood pressure:

- What should my blood pressure be?
- How often should I check my blood pressure?
- I usually feel fine. Do I still need to take my medicine?
- Are there any medicines I can take for both my high blood pressure and my kidneys?
- I don't like the way my medicine makes me feel. Is there something else I can take?
- Is there a difference between high blood pressure and hypertension?



Here are some terms you may hear when you talk to your doctor.

Blood glucose

Also called blood sugar. It can be tested by your doctor and you can also test it at home. Ask your doctor what your blood glucose should be.

Endocrinologist

A doctor that specializes in diabetes and its treatment.

Kidney failure

When your kidneys are not working well enough to get rid of your body's wastes and extra fluid. Stage 5 kidney disease means you have kidney failure. If you have kidney failure, you will need a transplant or go on dialysis to stay alive.

Dialysis

A treatment that uses a machine to do the job of cleaning waste and extra fluid from your blood if your kidneys stop working (kidney failure). If your kidneys fail, unless you have a kidney transplant, you will need dialysis for the rest of your life to stay alive.

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The Know Your Kidneys campaign is made possible with the support of:

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