

Tests to Know Your Kidneys



Your kidneys keep you healthy by filtering waste and excess fluid from your blood. Your doctor may recommend several tests to understand how well your kidneys are working.

The only way to know how well your kidneys are working is to get tested.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is diagnosed through a blood and a urine test. These tests can detect damage to your kidneys even before symptoms appear. They can help you and your doctor understand how well your kidneys are working.



eGFR Test

The eGFR (estimated glomerular filtration rate) blood test measures how well your kidneys filter waste from your blood. This test is an estimated number based on the amount of creatinine, a waste product, in your blood, your age, sex, and body type.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

- 60 or more: your kidneys are working properly
- Under 60 for 3 months or more: you may have kidney disease
- Below 15: you may have kidney failure and need to start dialysis or have a kidney transplant



uACR Test

The urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (uACR) test measures the amount of albumin (a protein in your blood) compared to creatinine (a waste product filtered out of your blood by your kidneys). If your kidneys are damaged, albumin can leak into your urine.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

- Below 30 mg/g: Normal
- 30-300 mg/g: Early kidney damage
- Above 300 mg/g: Significant kidney damage



To get the full picture of your kidney health, it's important to have both an eGFR blood test and a uACR urine test. Regular testing can help detect early kidney issues, especially if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of kidney disease.

Other tests can also help your doctor choose treatment options that will prevent your kidney disease from getting worse.



Imaging Tests

Imaging tests, like ultrasounds, CT scans, or MRIs, help doctors spot physical changes in your kidneys, such as:

- Unusual kidney size or shape
- Blood flow issues
- Kidney stones, cysts, or tumors
- Bladder size or urinary issues



Kidney Biopsy

A kidney biopsy involves taking a small tissue sample to understand the exact cause and severity of your kidney problem. Biopsies may be recommended for unexplained kidney disease, blood or protein in the urine, or to assess treatment effectiveness. Results guide your doctor in developing a customized treatment plan.



Genetic Testing

Genetic testing uses a simple blood or saliva (spit) sample to check for changes in your genes, chromosomes, or proteins. These changes can sometimes lead to kidney problems.

GENETIC TESTING CAN HELP:

- Confirm certain kidney conditions
- Show your risk of developing or passing on kidney disease
- Guide your doctor in managing and treating your kidney health

If you have a family history of kidney disease or don't know the cause of your kidney problems, genetic testing can help. A genetic counselor can help explain your results and support you and your family in making the best health decisions.



Advocate for yourself

You are the most important part of your healthcare team. Knowing more about your kidneys helps you and your doctor take steps to manage your kidney health. Stay up to date on your tests, as some may need to be repeated to monitor your health over time.

Learn more about your kidney health — **scan the QR code** to access resources from the American Kidney Fund.

