

Talk with Your Doctor About

Preventing Kidney Disease If You Have Diabetes or High Blood Pressure

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure or both, you have a higher chance (risk) of kidney disease. Kidney disease is very serious and can change your entire life. Two out of three people on dialysis have kidney failure caused by diabetes or high blood pressure. But, this does not have to be you.

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

If your doctor has not talked to you about kidney disease, here are tips to get ready for your next visit and questions to ask.

Get Ready for Your Visit

- Ask your questions at the start of your visit. Doctor visits can go by very fast, so this makes sure you have enough time for questions.
- If you do not understand something your doctor says, ask them what it means. It is normal to have questions.
- Bring someone with you to help ask questions and take notes.
- Bring a pen and notebook to write down the answers to your questions.
- Write down your questions before your visit. See the questions in this guide to get you started.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

About Kidney Disease

- Why is kidney disease serious?
- Am I too young to worry about kidney disease?
- Besides diabetes and high blood pressure, what else puts me at higher risk for kidney disease?
- If I have early kidney disease, will I feel any symptoms?



About Tests for Kidney Disease

- 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?
- What do my test results mean?

If You Have Diabetes

- What should my blood sugar (blood glucose) levels be?
- How often should I check my blood sugar?
- How does diabetes cause kidney disease?
- People in my family have diabetes and are on dialysis. Does that mean I will end up on dialysis?
- Are there any medicines I can take for both my diabetes and my kidneys?
- Should I see an endocrinologist (diabetes doctor) and a nephrologist (kidney doctor)?

If You Have High Blood Pressure

- What should my blood pressure be?
- How often should I check my blood pressure at home?
- 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?
- If I have side effects from my medicine, is there something else I can take?



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



Know the Terms

Your doctor may use these terms when they talk with you.

BLOOD GLUCOSE, OR BLOOD SUGAR

The level of sugar in your blood. Your doctor can do blood tests to check your blood sugar level (hemoglobin A1C), and you can test your blood sugar at home with a glucose meter.

DIALYSIS

A treatment that uses a machine to clean your blood. Dialysis does the work that your kidneys should be doing when your kidneys stop working (kidney failure). If on dialysis, you will need it for the rest of your life to stay alive, unless you have a kidney transplant.

ENDOCRINOLOGIST

A doctor who treats people with diabetes.

NEPHROLOGIST

A kidney doctor who treats people who have kidney disease. Ask your doctor when you need to see one.

KIDNEY FAILURE

Your kidneys stopped working well enough for you to survive without dialysis or a kidney transplant. It is also called Stage 5 kidney disease or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or end-stage kidney disease (ESKD).