



Talk with Your Doctor About Slowing Down Kidney Disease



[KidneyFund.org/KnowYourKidneys](https://www.kidneyfund.org/KnowYourKidneys)

Getting Ready for Your Visit

You can slow down the damage to your kidneys with the right information and care from your doctor. Here are some tips to prepare 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

- How did I get kidney disease?
- What do the kidney disease stages mean? What stage am I in right now?
- Why is kidney disease serious?
- I don't have symptoms. Does that mean I don't have kidney disease anymore?
- If I have diabetes, high blood pressure or both, what does that mean for my kidney disease?
- What is kidney failure?

About Managing Kidney Disease

- How often do I need to visit you?
- When do I need to see a nephrologist (kidney doctor)? (If you do not already see one.) Are there other specialists I should see?
- Will you test my kidneys at every visit? When will I get the test results back? What do my test results mean?

About Treatment Options

- How can I stop my kidney disease from getting worse?
- If my kidney disease starts to get worse, will I feel it?
- Is there a special way I need to eat with kidney disease?
- Are there medicines I can take if I have both kidney disease and diabetes?
- Will I need to go on dialysis?
- Will I need a kidney transplant?

You may have other questions, too. Write them in the space below. Visit KidneyFund.org/KnowYourKidneys for more information.



Know the Terms

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

STAGES OF KIDNEY DISEASE

Kidney disease is divided into 5 stages. Each stage refers to how much damage there is to your kidneys, and how well your kidneys are working to filter waste and extra fluid out of your blood. As the stages go up in number, kidney disease gets worse and your kidneys work less well.

In the early stages (Stages 1 to 3), your kidneys still work, but you need to change how you eat and may need to take medicine. At Stage 4, your kidneys do not work as well as they should, and you should talk with your doctor about your options if your kidneys fail (stop working). At Stage 5, your kidneys are very close to failure or have already failed. You will need a kidney transplant or dialysis to live. Stage 5 is also called kidney failure.

PROGRESSION

This word refers to kidney disease getting worse and moving to a later stage.

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.

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).



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