Primary hyperoxaluria (PH) and your kidneys

PH is a rare liver disease that causes kidney stones. It happens because your liver does not make enough of a certain protein that breaks down certain chemicals. This means that oxalate, a natural chemical in your body and in some foods, builds up and harms your body.

PH can cause kidney stones, kidney disease, and more serious health problems

1. When there is too much oxalate in your body, it combines with calcium in your kidneys to form calcium oxalate crystals.

Calcium oxalate crystals damage your kidneys in 2 ways:

- The crystals build up in your kidneys and damage them
- The crystals clump together to form kidney stones

2. Over time, kidney stones and crystals cause kidney disease (permanent damage). Your kidneys may even stop working, which is called kidney failure.

3. When your kidneys fail, they can no longer remove oxalate, and it builds up in other parts of your body. This is called oxalosis, and it can cause more serious health problems:

- Bone disease
- Kidney stones
- Blood problems
- Heart problems
- Skin problems, such as skin ulcers (open sores)

Ways to manage PH and slow kidney damage

- Take medicines as prescribed
- Drink enough fluids
- Follow a healthy meal plan that avoids foods high in oxalate

Kidney stones are often the earliest sign of PH.

Symptoms of kidney stones include:

- Pain while urinating
- Sharp pain in your back or lower belly
- Blood in your urine (pee)
- Feeling sick to your stomach or throwing up

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