

Kidney Disease and Diabetes: What You Need to Know

Why Am I at Risk?

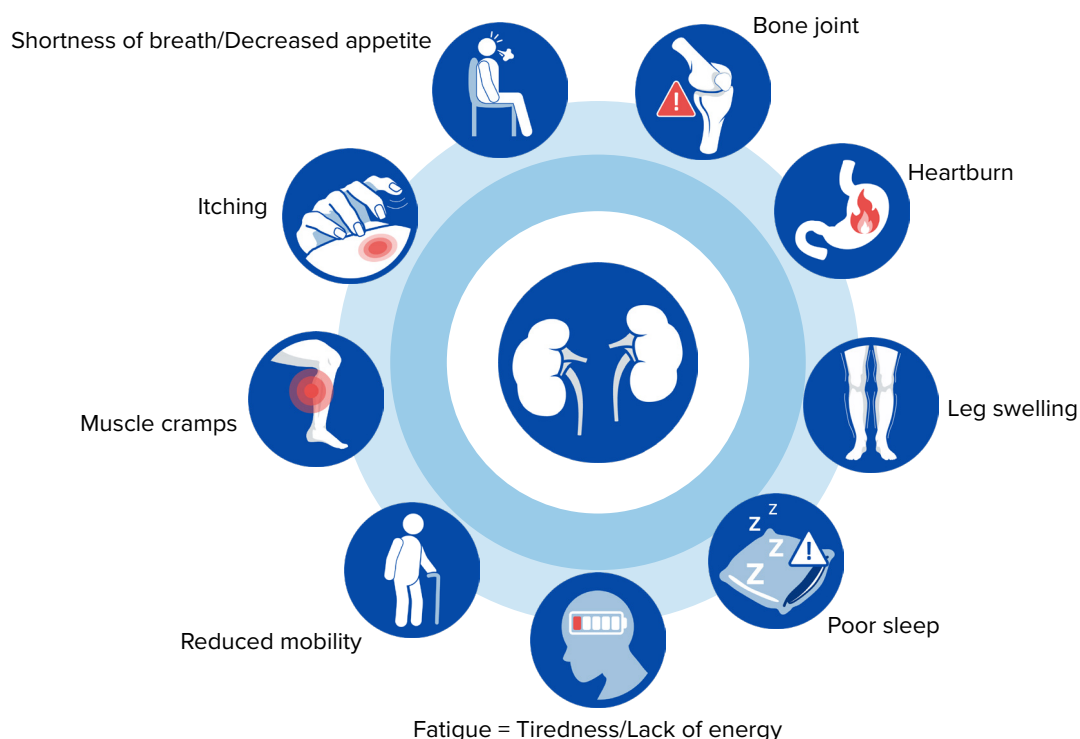
Your kidneys filter blood to balance salts and remove medications when you go to the bathroom. They also help keep bones healthy and help manage your blood pressure. If you have diabetes and/or high blood pressure, you are at higher risk of kidney problems and of progressing to chronic kidney disease (CKD). CKD is a long-term (chronic) problem with how your kidneys filter blood that usually gets worse over time. The worse CKD is, the higher the risk of heart problems, having to go to hospital, or death.

Other conditions can also make having kidney problems more likely. More people have trouble with their kidneys as they get older. Smoking, being overweight, and heart disease can also make CKD more likely. Doctors now think about diabetes, heart disease, and CKD as a family of problems because of how each increases the risk of the other.

What Should I Look Out For?

Many people with kidney disease or CKD don't know they have it because most people have no symptoms until the late stages of the disease (Stage 4). This Figure shows some common symptoms of CKD. Speak to your family doctor if any of these symptoms are causing you concern. If you have diabetes, your family doctor should be checking your kidneys annually. Depending on your results your doctor might talk to you about starting medication or send you to a specialist.

Common symptoms of CKD



Looking After Your Kidneys

Based on your test results, your doctor will help you decide if you need to take any medication. There is more than one option to treat kidney disease or CKD and some of the medications can also help treat high blood pressure, heart problems and/or diabetes.

Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (also commonly referred to as ACEIs) or angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are drugs you typically take as a tablet or pill. They reduce blood pressure, heart problems, and can improve how your kidneys filter blood. Common side effects include abdominal pain, dizziness, and dry cough.

Sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2is) are drugs which can help treat CKD, diabetes, and some heart problems. They are typically taken as a tablet or pill. You might experience dizziness and needing to urinate more often. Some patients are more susceptible to urinary infections when using SGLT2is, so tell your doctor if you are prone to these.

Nonsteroidal mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists can help with CKD, diabetes, and heart problems. They are typically taken as a tablet or pill. Their side effects include dizziness, weakness, or a fluttering or irregular heartbeat. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or don't go away.

Your doctor might also want to treat you with a glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor antagonist (GLP-1-RA) if your blood sugar is too high. These drugs can be taken as a tablet, pill, or by injection. They can help treat diabetes, and some heart problems, and may also help you lose weight. Common side effects include stomach problems, most often feeling sick. Drinking enough water can help these symptoms, tell your doctor if they are severe or don't go away.

Your doctor will work with you to make a treatment plan. They might want to give you more than one drug or change medications depending on your stage of CKD or other illnesses you have like high blood pressure, or heart problems. Your options will depend on your age, symptoms, health, and other medicines you take. Ask your doctor about the side effects of any drugs you are prescribed, and always talk to your doctor before taking medicines that don't need a prescription.



What Can I Do if I Have Diabetes and Kidney Problems?

You can make changes to your lifestyle to help improve your health:

- Eat less salty food
- Drink plenty of water (1.5 to 2 L per day)
- Exercise a little each day
- Lose weight
- Stop smoking