

Kidney Disease and High Blood Pressure: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Long-term (chronic) kidney disease happens when the kidneys cannot remove waste and keep your body's fluids and chemicals in balance. Usually, the kidneys remove waste from the blood through the urine. When the kidneys are not working well, waste can build up so much that it poisons the body. Kidney disease can make you very tired. It also can cause swelling, or edema, in your legs or other areas of your body.

High blood pressure is one of the major causes of chronic kidney disease. And kidney disease can also cause high blood pressure. No matter which came first, having high blood pressure damages the tiny blood vessels in the kidneys.

If you have high blood pressure, it is important to lower it. There are many things you can do to lower your blood pressure, which may help slow or stop the damage to your kidneys.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Be safe with medicines. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you have any problems with your medicine. You will probably need more than one medicine to lower your blood pressure. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.
- Work with your doctor and a dietitian to plan meals that have the right amount of nutrients for you. You will probably have to limit salt, fluids, and protein.
- Stay at a healthy weight. This is very important if you put on weight around the waist. Losing even 10 pounds can help you lower your blood pressure.
- Manage other health problems such as diabetes and high cholesterol. You can help lower your risk for heart disease and blood vessel problems with a healthy lifestyle along with medicines.
- Do not take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve), or similar medicines, unless your doctor tells you to. They may make chronic kidney disease worse. It is okay to take acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- If your doctor recommends it, get more exercise. Walking is a good choice. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk every day. Try for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. You also may want to swim, bike, or do other activities.
- Limit or avoid alcohol. Talk to your doctor about whether you can drink any alcohol.
- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around you. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have symptoms of a heart attack, such as:
 - Chest pain or pressure.
 - Sweating.
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Nausea or vomiting.
 - Pain that spreads from the chest to the neck, jaw, or one or both shoulders or arms.
 - Dizziness or lightheadedness.
 - A fast or uneven pulse.

After calling 911, chew 1 adult-strength aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You are confused or are more tired or weak than usual.
- You bleed or have bruises.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not want to eat.
- You have new swelling of your arms or feet, or swelling that you already have gets worse.
- You do not get better as expected.



Where can you learn more?

Go to [NextGen Knowledgebase](#).

Enter **U486** in the search box to learn more about "**Kidney Disease and High Blood Pressure: Care Instructions.**"

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