

Kidney Disease and Your Bones: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Healthy bones are constantly growing and changing. To keep your bones strong, your kidneys must keep the right balance of several important substances. These include phosphorus, calcium, parathyroid hormone, and vitamin D.

When you have chronic kidney disease, your body no longer keeps the right balance of these substances. This can lead to bone disease. When bone disease is caused by kidney problems, it is called renal bone disease.

Renal bone disease is called a "silent disease" because the bone changes begin long before symptoms occur. As renal bone disease gets worse, it may cause:

- Calcium deposits in the blood vessels, which may lead to heart disease.
- Itchy skin.
- Pain in your bones and joints.
- Weak muscles.
- Broken bones.
- Crooked bones or short height in children.

By working with your doctor, you can take steps to reduce your chance of having weak or broken bones.

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?

How can you prevent renal bone disease?

You may be able to avoid renal bone disease by:

- Getting regular exercise, which can help keep your bones strong.
- Getting the right amount of phosphorus, calcium, and vitamin D. Follow the diet your doctor or dietitian gives you.

How can you treat renal bone disease?

There are many types of treatment for renal bone disease. You may need to:

- Eat a diet that is low in phosphorus. A dietitian can help you make an eating plan that is low in phosphorus. Your eating plan may advise you to:
 - Limit dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, or ice cream.
 - Avoid nuts, peanut butter, seeds, lentils, peas, and beans.

- Avoid drinks such as beer, cola, and cocoa.
- Take a medicine called a phosphate binder. A phosphate binder helps control the level of phosphorus in your blood.
- Take vitamin D and calcium pills.
- Take medicine to control your parathyroid glands. In some cases, these glands need to be removed by a surgeon.
- Exercise to strengthen your bones. To make sure that an exercise program is safe for you, talk to your doctor before you begin.

What else can you do if you have renal bone disease?

- Work closely with your doctor, have regular testing, and follow all treatment steps.
- Your doctor can advise you about how often you need testing. If you are on dialysis, you will probably be tested every 6 months.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You are confused or have trouble thinking clearly.
- You are very thirsty, lightheaded, or dizzy.

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

- You have pain in your bones and joints.
- You feel weaker or more tired than usual.
- Your skin itches.



Where can you learn more?

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