

Healthy Living Newsletter

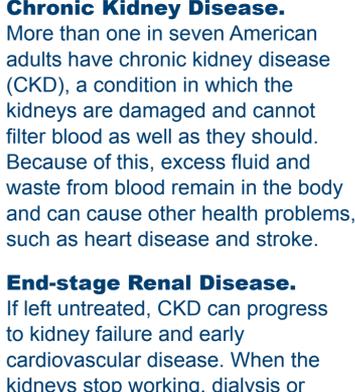
A MedWatch publication to keep you healthy and informed.



Keeping Your Kidneys Healthy

What is Chronic Kidney Disease?

Your kidneys, each just the size of a computer mouse, filter all the blood in your body every 30 minutes. They work hard to remove wastes, toxins, and excess fluid. They also help control blood pressure, stimulate production of red blood cells, keep your bones healthy, and regulate blood chemicals that are essential to life. Kidneys that function properly are critical for maintaining good health.



Anyone can get kidney disease, but some things can make it more likely to happen to certain people. The risk of CKD increases for people older than 65 years. The condition also runs in families. It's more likely to occur in African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian-Americans. Other **risk factors** for CKD include:

- Cigarette smoking
- Obesity
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes (types 1 & 2)
- Obstructive kidney disease
- Atherosclerosis
- Cirrhosis and liver failure
- Autoimmune disease
- Kidney or bladder cancer
- Kidney stones
- Kidney infection
- Vasculitis

Chronic Kidney Disease.

More than one in seven American adults have chronic kidney disease (CKD), a condition in which the kidneys are damaged and cannot filter blood as well as they should. Because of this, excess fluid and waste from blood remain in the body and can cause other health problems, such as heart disease and stroke.

End-stage Renal Disease.

If left untreated, CKD can progress to kidney failure and early cardiovascular disease. When the kidneys stop working, dialysis or kidney transplant is needed for survival. This level of kidney failure is called end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

How do I know if I have CKD?

CKD does not have any symptoms until your kidneys are badly damaged. The only way to know how well your kidneys are working is to get tested. Being tested for kidney disease is simple, so if you are at risk for CKD talk your doctor or your Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) at (800) 386-5475.

(Source: National Kidney Foundation)

GETTING HELP WITH CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



1 in 7 adults has Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) which damages kidneys and increases the risk of heart disease, blood vessel, bone and nerve damage. CKD is caused by diabetes, high blood pressure and other disorders. If left unchecked, it leads to kidney failure, dialysis, and potential kidney transplantation. Early identification and treatment are essential to halting – or curtailing – further damage.

For those members afflicted with CKD, there is help. The **MedWatch Kidney Care Program** was designed to assist patients in understanding and managing the care needed to prevent or slow the advancement of kidney disease. The key to the program is the dedication of the Case Managers and other staff to provide patients with optimal care, coaching and education tailored for their specific medical condition and living situation. Here's how it works:

Identification of Program Candidates. Our specialized Case Managers (CMs) analyze claims, biometric screening (collection of vital statistics) and outpatient reviews to identify patients who are experiencing kidney disease. They contact the candidate to discuss the array of services available to address their specific situation.

Development of a Treatment Plan. Once the patient agrees to participate in the program a CM is assigned to collaborate with physicians and other caregivers in support of the patient's treatment plan. The CM engages with the patient to help them understand and manage their own health care.

Provide Education and Monitor Patient Compliance. Chronic kidney disease and its treatment is complicated, and most doctors do not have the time to walk the patient through every aspect of the condition or treatment options. The CM provides a valuable bridge between caregivers and patients by helping them become more aware of their condition and treatment choices. The CM also assists the patient in developing individual goals in collaboration with his/her family and healthcare providers.

As necessary, the CM helps change patient behavior to reduce their health risks, thus delaying the need for serious intervention, such as dialysis. This often involves improving patients' compliance with drug regimens, physician prescribed care, lab follow-up, diet, and exercise.

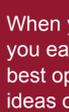
Assist With Medical Management Matters. As if having chronic kidney disease were not difficult enough, the tangle of administrative requirements associated with being a patient can be daunting. Questions related to health benefits, insurance coverage, claim management, enrollment for treatments and appropriate pricing of medical services be confusing. In these instances, the CM can draw from MedWatch resources to assist the patient in navigating the red tape of health care. For example, MedWatch staff can verify health plan benefit coverage, arrange access to community resources, coordinate services, determine fair pricing for procedures, and negotiate healthcare fees.

Patients who actively participate in the MedWatch Kidney Care Program enjoy a dedicated partner and advocate to assess their plan of care, address risk factors and provide education on CKD. Outcomes often include improved health, morale, and functional status.

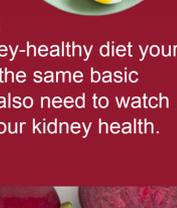
(Source: Interview with Karen Hicks and MedWatch)

Ready to Start Living Healthy?

Before you begin any exercise routine or alter your diet, be sure to check with your doctor or Total Lifestyle Coach.

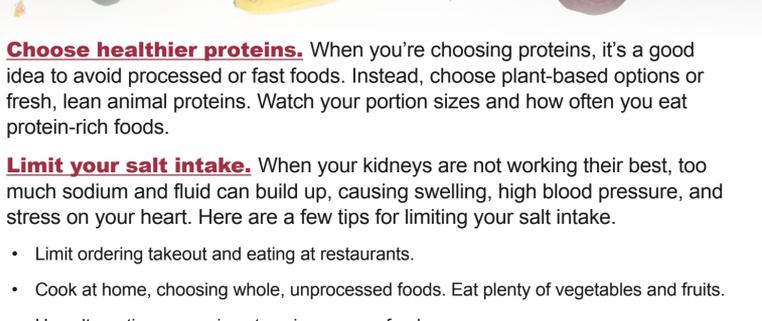


Nutrition Corner



EATING WELL ON A CKD DIET

When you're living with chronic kidney disease (CKD), what you eat and drink is important to your health, making a kidney-healthy diet your best option. Although a kidney-friendly diet follows many of the same basic ideas of a regular healthy diet, people living with CKD may also need to watch or limit certain foods. Here are some guidelines to protect your kidney health.



Choose healthier proteins. When you're choosing proteins, it's a good idea to avoid processed or fast foods. Instead, choose plant-based options or fresh, lean animal proteins. Watch your portion sizes and how often you eat protein-rich foods.

Limit your salt intake. When your kidneys are not working their best, too much sodium and fluid can build up, causing swelling, high blood pressure, and stress on your heart. Here are a few tips for limiting your salt intake.

- Limit ordering takeout and eating at restaurants.
- Cook at home, choosing whole, unprocessed foods. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
- Use alternative seasonings to spice up your food.
- Check food labels before you buy to help you choose less salty options.
- Rinse canned foods before cooking.
- Salt preference is an acquired taste that can be unlearned. It takes about 6-8 weeks to get used to eating food with much lower quantities of salt.

Limit phosphorus and calcium. When your kidneys are healthy, they remove the phosphorus you don't need. But if you have CKD, your phosphorus levels can get too high, putting you at risk for heart disease.

Choose complex carbs over simple carbs. Carbohydrates that occur naturally in fresh foods are filled with fiber to support heart and gut health and keep your blood sugar levels steady.

Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fat. Diets that are high in saturated and trans fats increase the risk of heart disease — and what's bad for your heart is bad for your kidneys. Main sources include meats, full-fat dairy products, butter, lard, coconut oil, and palm oil.

Watch your alcohol intake. Alcohol harms your kidneys in several ways. It's a waste product that your kidneys must filter out of your blood — and it makes your kidneys less efficient. It can also affect your liver function which, in turn, can impact blood flow to the kidneys and lead to CKD over time.

(Source: healthline.com)



10 Fast Facts You Should Know About Kidney Disease

1. About 13 percent of U.S. adults have CKD.
2. The leading causes of CKD are diabetes and high blood pressure. Diabetes rates are rising in large part due to increasing obesity rates.
3. Most people are born with two kidneys, but you only need one functioning kidney to live a full, healthy life.
4. CKD progresses in stages and, if untreated, can lead to complete loss of kidney function. At CKD stage five, when both kidneys fail completely, the only options for survival are dialysis or a kidney transplant.
5. The progression of CKD can often be slowed, but many people do not have symptoms early in the disease.
6. CKD affects people of all ages. However, those 60 and over are the most likely to develop CKD.
7. Certain ethnic groups, including African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, are more likely to develop CKD.
8. About 430,000 Americans with kidney failure rely on regular blood-filtering dialysis treatments to survive.
9. Although most patients receive dialysis treatments in a clinic three days a week, a growing number undergo dialysis in the comfort of their own homes.
10. More than 90,000 U.S. patients are waiting for kidney transplants, but only about 18,000 of them will get a kidney transplant each year.

If you or a loved one are at risk for CKD, please visit your physician and get screened.

(Source: National Kidney Foundation)

Prevention of Chronic Kidney Disease

If you have kidney disease, you may be able to slow its progress by making healthy lifestyle choices:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Be active most days.
- Limit protein and eat a balanced diet of nutritious, low-sodium foods.
- Control your blood pressure.
- Take your medications as prescribed.
- Have your cholesterol levels checked every year.
- Control your blood sugar level.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco products.
- Get regular checkups.

(Source: National Kidney Foundation)



Your Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) is your personal 'health advocate'.

For more information, additional tools, and resources to help you improve and maintain your health, call (800) 386-5475.