



# Kidney Disease



## What is kidney disease?

Your kidneys filter extra water and wastes out of your blood and makes urine. Your kidneys also help control your blood pressure so that your body can stay healthy. Kidney or renal (meaning relating to the kidney/s) disease means that the kidneys are damaged and can't filter blood like they should. This damage can cause wastes to build up in the body.

## What causes kidney disease?

- For most people, kidney damage occurs slowly over many years, often due to diabetes or high blood pressure. This is called chronic kidney disease.
- When someone has a sudden change in kidney function because of illness, injury, or has taken certain medications, this is called acute kidney disease. This can occur in a person with normal kidneys or in someone who already has kidney problems.

## What are the risk factors for kidney disease?

The main risk factors for developing kidney disease are:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) disease
- Family history of kidney disease

**Diabetes and high blood pressure are the most common causes of kidney disease. These conditions can slowly damage your kidneys over time.**

**Kidney (or renal) disease is by far the highest in Aboriginal people than any other Australians in all states and territories in Australia.**



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## What are the symptoms of kidney disease?

Early kidney disease has no signs or symptoms. You may not feel any different until your kidney disease is very advanced. Blood and urine tests are the only way to know if you have kidney disease. A blood test checks how well your kidneys are filtering and the urine test checks for protein in your urine which may indicate early renal disease.

Signs and symptoms of kidney disease may include:

- ! Nausea and vomiting
- ! Loss of appetite
- ! Tiredness and weakness
- ! Passing only small amounts of urine
- ! Muscle cramps (especially in the legs)
- ! Swelling in your feet and ankles
- ! Continual itching
- ! Shortness of breath
- ! High blood pressure that's difficult to control

## For more information

Contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health worker. Aboriginal Chronic Care workers are located in NSW Health Services and some Aboriginal Medical Services.

PDF's can be downloaded and printed from Chronic Care for Aboriginal People Program:  
[www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap](http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap)

Email: [ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au)

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## Reduce your risk of kidney disease

- ✓ If you smoke, try and quit
- ✓ Choose smaller portions and fewer kilojoules
- ✓ Eat more fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Make water your drink
- ✓ Be active every day
- ✓ Sit less and move more
- ✓ Get tested if you're at risk for kidney disease
- ✓ Get your doctor or health worker to check your blood pressure at each visit
- ✓ Check your blood glucose levels regularly
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight range
- ✓ Take all of your prescribed medications

## Free services

- > **Get Healthy Service**  
Call the 'Get Healthy Service' for free personal telephone coaching to support you with your physical activity goals'. Your free NSW Health service provides the expertise and motivation you need to help reach your goals.

[www.gethealthynsw.com.au](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au)  
or call 1300 806 258

- > **NSW Health Make Healthy Normal**  
[www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au](http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au)



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