

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a condition where the kidneys gradually lose their ability to filter waste and excess fluids from the blood. This damage happens slowly over time, often without noticeable symptoms in the early stages. As the disease progresses, it can lead to kidney failure, requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Symptoms

- **Fatigue:** Feeling tired or weak.
- **Swelling:** In feet, ankles, or hands due to fluid retention.
- **Changes in urination:** Increased or decreased frequency, foamy urine.
- **Shortness of breath:** Due to fluid buildup in the lungs.
- **Nausea and vomiting:** Feeling sick to your stomach.
- **Loss of appetite:** Not feeling hungry.
- **Itchy skin:** Persistent itching.

Diagnosis

- **Blood tests:** To check levels of waste products like creatinine and urea.
- **Urine tests:** To detect abnormalities such as protein or blood in the urine.
- **Imaging tests:** Ultrasound or CT scans to assess kidney structure.
- **Kidney biopsy:** A small sample of kidney tissue is examined for damage.

Treatment

- **Medications:** To control blood pressure, manage symptoms, and slow disease progression.
- **Dialysis:** A treatment that filters and purifies the blood using a machine, used in advanced stages.
- **Kidney transplant:** Replacing the damaged kidney with a healthy one from a donor.

Lifestyle Changes

- **Diet:** Eat a kidney-friendly diet low in sodium, potassium, and phosphorus.
- **Exercise:** Regular physical activity to maintain overall health.
- **Quit smoking:** Smoking can worsen kidney damage.
- **Limit alcohol:** Reduce or eliminate alcohol consumption.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to help kidneys function properly.

Support Groups

- **Renal Support Network:** Offers online support groups and resources for people with kidney disease <https://www.rsnhope.org/>

- DaVita: Provides support groups and educational resources for those living with CKD
<https://www.davita.com/care-support>
- American Kidney Fund: Connects patients with local support groups and resources
<https://www.kidneyfund.org/community-resource-finder>

For additional information, check out:

- American Kidney Fund <https://www.kidneyfund.org/all-about-kidneys/chronic-kidney-disease-ckd>
- National Kidney Foundation <https://www.kidney.org/kidney-topics/chronic-kidney-disease-ckd>

The Mayo Clinic <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-kidney-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20354521>