

KIDNEY MATTERS

Information from The National Kidney Federation
supporting kidney patients, their friends & family

I'VE GOT KIDNEY DISEASE

Will I need dialysis or a transplant?

- Summary
- What is kidney disease?
- What is kidney failure?
- Does all kidney disease lead to end stage kidney disease?
- Can end stage kidney disease be prevented once I have kidney disease
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The National Kidney Federation cannot accept responsibility for information provided. The above is for guidance only. Patients are advised to seek further information from their own doctor.

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Last reviewed April, 2017

www.kidney.org.uk

The NKF - the largest Kidney Patient charity in the UK

A federation of more than fifty patient charities, supporting kidney patients & carers

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Wales. Give as you earn contributions No CAF.GY511



www.kidney.org.uk

HELPLINE 0800 169 09 36



Summary

Kidney disease is very common. However, less than 1 in 10 of the people with kidney disease develop failure of the kidneys requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Even though they may never develop complete kidney failure, people with kidney disease will benefit from tests to see if they are likely to develop problems in the future. If the blood pressure is high it should be treated to protect the kidneys against further damage and to reduce the risk of stroke or heart attack.

What is kidney disease?

Kidney disease is a term used by doctors to include any abnormality of the kidneys, even if there is only very slight damage. It is often called 'chronic' kidney disease. Chronic is a medical term that means a condition that does not get completely better in a few days. A problem with the kidneys which gets better and leaves no damage, such as a urine infection, is not chronic kidney disease.

Recent research suggests that 1 in 10 of the population may have slight kidney disease. This is more common in the elderly than in young people, though as many as 1 in 20 young adults may have signs of kidney disease. In most cases people with kidney disease feel perfectly well and the kidney disease does not cause any symptoms, it is often detected because tests are abnormal. These may be urine tests for blood or protein; an X-ray or scan of the kidneys; or a blood test to measure kidney function. In many people the kidneys can continue to work for some years without deteriorating to a serious level.

What is kidney failure?

Kidney failure is a medical term that can be confusing. It is sometimes used to mean that the kidneys no longer work well enough to remove toxins and water and that the disease in the kidneys is severe. It is not now used as often and has been replaced by end stage kidney disease, which means that the kidneys no longer work well and dialysis and transplantation are considered.

For more information on the stages of chronic kidney disease see NKF leaflet entitled Chronic Kidney Disease available by ringing the NKF Helpline number.

Does all kidney disease lead to end stage kidney disease?

Most people with kidney disease have a minor problem and never develop end stage kidney disease. However, it is common for those with kidney disease to have high blood pressure and problems with the circulation, so that some tests and ongoing treatment are required.

Overall, less than 1 in 10 of those with any type of kidney disease will develop end stage kidney disease.

Can end stage kidney disease be prevented, once I have kidney disease?

The long term outlook depends on the type of kidney disease present, and the severity of this disease. These factors will have to be discussed individually with the medical team.

The NKF website contains many information areas for different kidney diseases. Some of the common ones are listed here, for those that are not here, please take a look at our website www.kidney.org.uk

Conditions that often lead to end stage kidney disease :

- Diabetic kidney disease
- Alport's syndrome in men

Conditions that sometimes lead to end stage kidney disease :

- Polycystic kidney disease
- Most types of glomerulonephritis (eg IgA nephropathy)
- Vasculitis
- Reflux nephropathy
- Renal artery stenosis

Conditions that rarely lead to kidney failure

- Minimal change nephropathy
- Haematuria with no added features
- Proteinuria with no added features

Lifestyle issues for people with Kidney Disease

- Holiday Insurance
- Keeping fit on Dialysis
- Sex problems with renal failure