

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD) AND HYPERTENSION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)?

Chronic kidney disease occurs when your kidneys are damaged and no longer work as well as they should. Healthy kidneys remove waste from the blood. The waste then leaves your body in your urine. The kidneys also help control blood pressure and make red blood cells. If you have chronic kidney disease, your kidneys cannot remove waste from the blood as well as they should. Almost 20 million people in the United States have this disease.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CKD?

Most people don't have any symptoms early in the disease. Once the disease progresses, the symptoms can include the following:

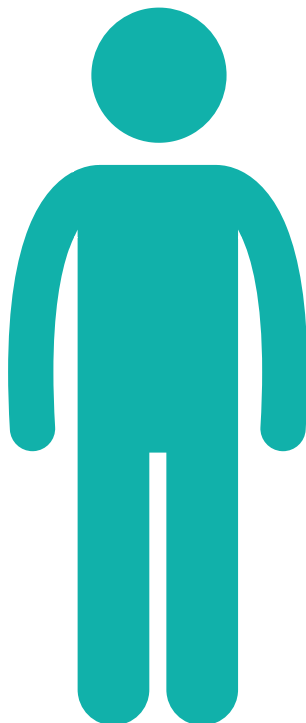
Not thinking clearly

**Feeling
tired**

**Not
sleeping**

**Feeling
weak**

**Loss of
appetite**



Swelling of the feet and ankles

WHAT CAUSES CKD AND AM I AT RISK?

The most common causes of CKD are high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. Chronic kidney disease can also be caused by infections or urinary blockages.

You may be at risk if someone in your family has CKD or if you have diabetes or if you have high blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about your risk factors. It is important to diagnose CKD early.

I HAVE CKD. WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT OR SLOW DOWN PROBLEMS?

Your doctor will talk to you about treating the problems that damaged the kidneys.

If you have high blood pressure, it is important to lower your blood pressure. Medicines called ACE inhibitors and angiotensin-II receptor blockers can be helpful. These medicines lower blood pressure and may help keep your kidney disease from getting worse. Exercise and a healthy diet can also help to lower your blood pressure.

WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension (high blood pressure) occurs when your blood moves through your arteries at a higher pressure than normal. Many different things can cause high blood pressure. If your blood pressure gets too high or stays high for a long time, it can cause health problems.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HYPERTENSION?

Most people who have hypertension do not have any symptoms. This is why it's sometimes called "the silent killer" and why it's so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

WHAT CAUSES HYPERTENSION?

Several different things can cause hypertension. Your doctor can help you find out what might be causing yours. In general, there are 2 types of hypertension:

- **Primary hypertension**, also called essential hypertension, is when there is no known cause for your high blood pressure. This type of blood pressure usually takes many years to develop and probably is a result of your lifestyle, environment, and how your body changes as you age.
- **Secondary hypertension** is when a health problem or medicine is causing your high blood pressure. Things that can cause secondary hypertension include:
 - Certain medicines, such as birth control pills, NSAIDs (a type of pain reliever), and corticosteroids
 - Excessive alcohol intake
 - Excessive licorice intake
 - Kidney problems
 - Obesity
 - Sleep apnea
 - Thyroid or adrenal gland problems

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

The following are some common factors that can lead to high blood pressure:

- A diet high in salt, fat, and/or cholesterol
- Chronic conditions such as kidney and hormone problems, diabetes, and high cholesterol

- Family history: You are more likely to have high blood pressure if your parents or other close relatives also have it
- Lack of physical activity
- Older age: The older you are, the more likely you are to have high blood pressure
- Overweight and obesity
- Race: Non-Hispanic black people are more likely to have high blood pressure than people of other races
- Some birth control medicines
- Stress
- Tobacco use or drinking too much alcohol

HOW IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE DIAGNOSED?

The only way to know whether your blood pressure is too high is to check it with a blood pressure monitor. The higher your blood pressure is, the more often you need to check it.

Your doctor will measure your blood pressure at more than one visit to see if you have high blood pressure. When you first start treatment to lower your blood pressure, your doctor may want you to come to the office regularly. Your blood pressure will be checked at the office.

You may also be asked to check your blood pressure at home and keep track of your numbers for your doctor.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I HAVE MY BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED?

After age 18, have your blood pressure checked at least once every 2 years. Do it more often if you have had high blood pressure in the past. Your doctor may even ask you to monitor your blood pressure at home.

REFERENCES

All information sourced from FamilyDoctor.org, a resource operated by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)