



AWARENESS

## KIDNEYS - PRECIOUS ORGANS TO PRESERVE

Damage to the kidneys is serious. They are essential for survival. When the kidneys stop functioning the disease is called “kidney failure”.

### How will I know if I have kidney failure?

In early stages of kidney failure there may be no symptoms. The first sign of kidney damage is the presence of protein in the urine (the kidneys start behaving as an abnormal filter and allow proteins through), which is only detectable with a special urine test. Protein may appear in the urine for 5-10 years before other symptoms or signs develop.

Moderate kidney failure will still cause no symptoms and it is only diagnosed by the presence of protein in the urine and specialised blood tests, which will show a gradual rise in “toxins” in the blood (since the kidneys no longer filter them).

Only severe or “final stage” kidney failure will actually cause physical symptoms. A person will become itchy, lose muscle mass and may have water swelling all over the body. They will feel tired and nauseous. Without a kidney transplant or dialysis, the person will die.

### How can I prevent getting kidney disease?

**Blood sugar control:** Diabetes can cause kidney failure. Maintaining a healthy blood sugar levels through a healthy diet and lifestyle and taking appropriate medication can help to protect you against kidney failure.

**Screening:** Ask your doctor about screening for kidney failure. The screening test is to check for protein in the urine. The doctor will request a urine sample from you and check for the presence of protein in the urine.

**Blood pressure control:** Your doctor should check for and treat high blood pressure at each visit and chronic high blood pressure can damage the kidneys.

**Medication:** Certain drugs used to treat high blood pressure (ACE inhibitors) may help to protect your kidneys. These medications are prescribed by your doctor.

[Your kidneys are precious and taking care of them](#) is one of the most important steps to take for a healthier life.