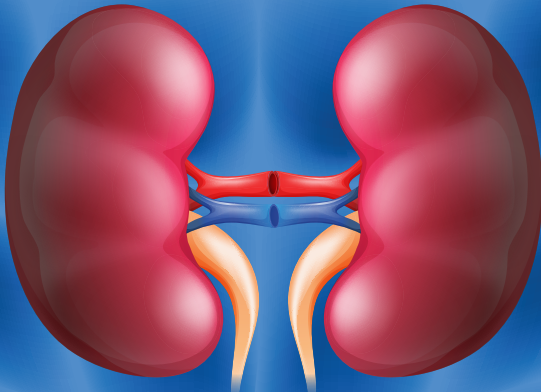


FIVE SURPRISING WAYS YOU MAY BE DAMAGING YOUR KIDNEYS



Your kidneys work 24/7 to keep your body healthy by filtering out toxins and extra fluid and regulating blood pressure. Damage to these vital organs may be irreversible and many people do not realize they are causing harm. The following are five surprising ways you might be damaging your kidneys:

Long term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (over-the-counter painkillers, known as NSAIDs)

- As many as 3% to 5% of new cases of chronic kidney failure each year may be caused by the overuse of painkillers
- Long-term use, especially at high doses, has a harmful effect on kidney tissue and structures
- These drugs can also reduce the blood flow to the kidney



Cigarette smoking

People who smoke are more likely to:

- » Have protein in the urine, which is a sign of kidney damage
- » Need dialysis or kidney transplants.



Exposure to contrast dye commonly used in x-ray procedures such as angiograms and CT scans

Sometimes the dye can cause serious problems in the kidneys called contrast induced nephropathy (CIN).

- » CIN is a rare complication and may be preventable
- » Discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor before having your procedure



Consuming large quantities of salt

Diets high in sodium increase blood pressure levels, which:

- » Damages the kidneys over time
- » Is a leading cause of kidney failure



Drinking large amounts of cola-based soft drink beverages

Studies have shown that drinking two or more colas a day—diet or regular—is linked to a higher risk of developing chronic kidney disease.



For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: **855.NKF.CARES** or email: nkfcare@kidney.org