



Obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The CKD-Obesity Connection

Obesity is a risk factor for CKD and can speed up its progression. Obesity can:

- Cause inflammation (swelling) in the tiny filters in your kidneys
- Make your kidneys work extra hard (also called “hyperfiltration”)
- Lead to albuminuria (protein in the urine), a sign of kidney damage
- Raise your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease (other risk factors for CKD)

CKD can make weight gain more likely. CKD can:

- Make it harder to get rid of extra fluid (water) and natural waste products
- Slow down your metabolism and energy
- Cause swelling all over your body

Reaching a healthy weight in a safe way can help protect your kidneys and improve your overall health and wellbeing.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

The main measure of obesity is BMI, which compares weight to height. It is an imperfect measure since it does not show body fat or where it’s stored. So, it should be viewed in the context of your overall health.

BMI Category	Description
Under 18.5	Underweight
18.5–24.9	Healthy weight
25–29.9	Overweight
30–34.9	Class 1 obesity
35–39.9	Class 2 obesity
40 or more	Class 3 obesity



Where to Start

Not all weight loss is healthy, and managing weight is more than watching the scale.

These tips can be a guide to a healthier weight.

Know Your “Why”

- Write down your reasons for losing weight and keep them where you’ll see them every day.
- Writing down your reasons will help you stay focused on your goal.

Track Your Habits

- Pay attention to your food, activity, and sleep to see where you can improve. You can write this information down in a journal or use an app.
- Tracking your habits helps to identify how you want to improve your health.

Set Specific and Realistic Goals

- Work with your care team to set safe targets. Usually losing 5-10% of your weight is enough to help your health. A gradual, steady weight loss (1-2 pounds a week) works best in the long-term.
- Avoid setting unrealistic goals – these can make you feel defeated and frustrated.

Problem Solve

- Most people face challenges when losing weight - like finding time to exercise, making healthy food choices while eating out, or getting enough restful sleep. Don't get discouraged! Look for ways to overcome these challenges and ask your friends, family, or care team for support.
- Remember, setbacks happen. This is expected. When they happen, get back on track as quickly as possible. Then, think about how to prevent them in the future.

Find Support

- Lean on friends, family, coworkers, or your care team – they can keep you motivated and connect you with resources.

Monitor Your Progress

- Review your goals, see what's working, adjust if needed, and celebrate successes with non-food rewards.

Treatment Options and Approaches

It often takes many strategies and hard work to be successful. Things like health problems, stress, genes, hormones, your environment, medicines, and age can make weight loss harder. Work with your care team to create a plan that's right for you.



Adapted from: Kaesler N, Fleig S. *Clin Kidney J.* 2024;17(11):sf317

Notes



← **Learn more about Obesity and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)**

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

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