



## DIABETES AND KIDNEY DISEASE

# Why diabetes matters for your kidneys

Diabetes is the leading cause of chronic kidney disease. Diabetes causes high blood sugar, which over time can damage the small blood vessels in your kidneys. When this happens, your kidneys cannot filter waste and extra fluid from your blood as well as they should.

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can affect kidney health.



### How diabetes affects the kidneys

Your kidneys act like filters. High blood sugar can:

- Damage the filters in your kidneys
- Cause protein to leak into your urine
- Make it harder for your kidneys to remove waste
- Increase your risk of kidney failure over time

Kidney damage from diabetes often happens slowly and may not cause symptoms at first.



### Signs and symptoms

Early kidney disease often has no symptoms. As kidney damage worsens, symptoms may include:

- Swelling in the feet, ankles, hands, or face
- Feeling tired or weak
- Changes in how often you urinate (pee)
- Foamy urine
- Trouble thinking clearly

Talk with your doctor if you notice any changes.



### Tests that protect your kidneys

If you have diabetes, regular testing is important even if you feel well. Ask your doctor about:

- Blood tests to check how well your kidneys filter blood
- Urine tests to check for protein
- Blood pressure checks

These tests can help find kidney disease early, when treatment works best.



### Steps you can take to protect your kidneys

Managing diabetes can slow kidney damage and help protect your health.

You can:

- Keep your blood sugar in your target range
- Take medicines as prescribed
- Control blood pressure
- Choose kidney friendly foods
- Be physically active as recommended by your doctor
- Stop smoking

Small steps over time can make a big difference.



### Medicines and kidney health

Some diabetes medicines can help protect your kidneys. Your doctor may also prescribe medicines to control blood pressure or reduce protein in your urine. Never stop or change medicines without talking with your doctor.



### Nutrition tips

Eating well supports both blood sugar and kidney health. A registered dietitian can help you:

- Balance carbohydrates
- Choose healthier protein options
- Limit sodium
- Plan meals that work for your lifestyle and culture



### Questions to ask your doctor

- How often should I have my kidneys checked?
- What are my kidney test results?
- What can I do to protect my kidneys?
- Should I see a kidney doctor?
- Can I meet with a dietitian?
- How can I keep track of my blood sugar and blood pressure at home?

### Notes

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