

7 WAYS TO HELP MANAGE CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



There are 7 steps you can take to help protect your kidneys from more damage due to chronic kidney disease (CKD), which can also prevent heart disease and improve your overall health.

1 Lab tests

It is helpful to know your lab test results. Ask your healthcare provider for a copy of your lab results. You and your healthcare team should set target goals for blood pressure, diabetes, anemia, cholesterol, and bone and minerals. Keeping accurate records can help you and your healthcare team stay on track.

2 Take your medications

Take all of your medications every day and exactly as directed. If you are having trouble taking your medications or if you experience side effects, let your healthcare team know. They can help you.

3 Eat healthy foods

Everyone has different nutritional needs, but most people with kidney disease need to be careful with foods that contain high amounts of certain minerals, such as potassium, sodium, and phosphorus. You may also need to keep track of how much fluid you drink each day. Protein needs are affected by the stage of CKD or type of dialysis you are on. Getting all the vitamins and nutrients you need is also important.

Kidney transplant recipients usually have fewer dietary restrictions. A transplant dietitian can help you plan meals so that you eat the right foods in the right amounts. Talk to your healthcare team about a Medical Nutrition Therapy referral.

4 Get regular physical activity

Being active helps control blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and helps to keep your heart working as well as possible and with less effort. Physical activity can give you more energy, reduce stress, and help you remain more independent for a longer amount of time. It has also been shown to improve depression and general mood. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 150 minutes of physical activity per week, which can be done in 10-minute intervals.

Don't confuse physical activity with vigorous exercise. Any type of body movement helps including walking, gardening, dancing, babysitting, even shopping. The key is to find something that you enjoy. Your energy will increase with activity, and over time, you will be able to be more active. Always check with your healthcare team before starting any new physical activity.



5 Manage Your Stress

Stress is a normal part of life and is common in people with a chronic illness. The goal of managing your stress is not to eliminate it but to have control over it. Stress management can help improve physical and emotional health.

There are many ways to help manage stress. You can start by taking the time to do things you enjoy such as physical activity, relaxation and breathing exercises, meditation, prayer, music, yoga and many more.

6 Keep in touch with family and friends

Staying close to other people and being involved in your community is important. Social support is something we all need, but it is especially important for people with CKD. If you feel isolated or lonely, talk to your social worker.

7 Get professional help

Studies show that between 20% and 40% of people with kidney failure may have depression, which can make it harder for you to concentrate, remember directions, follow your doctor's advice, or to take your medicine on time.

If you feel overly sad, irritable, having trouble coping, cry more than usual, are losing interest in things you used to enjoy, or if you feel like you just want to give up—you may have depression.

It is important to know that depression is a medical condition and it can be treated with medication, therapy, or a combination of both. Your social worker can help you find a behavioral health specialist.

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

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