

Everything about Kidney Failure – Signs, Symptoms, Causes and Prevention

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More often than not we are so caught up with life that we hardly heed the subtle signs that our bodies give us, until they too chronic and beyond our control. **Kidney failure** is one such condition that begs our attention. More and more people are capitulating to this disease, despite the fact that awareness around it has increased in the past few years. Though the only way to catch the disease early is through testing, there are some signs and [symptoms of kidney failure](#) you should be aware of, which will certainly help you to keep abreast of your health.



It is also true that you are more at risk when you hit 60 or if you are older than that. You should definitely get yourself tested for kidney disease if you have diabetes or hypertension or one or more of your family members have suffered from kidney failure.

Signs and Symptoms of Kidney Failure

Take a break from the everyday mayhem and concentrate on the subtle signs that your body gives you; this will not only catch the disease early but also ensure that you are cured of the disease before it becomes too complicated to respond to treatment.

- **You are fatigued and lack energy-** If you are always tired, fatigued and generally lack energy, it is time you got yourself checked. Most of the time, we blame our tiredness to our work or just our hectic lifestyle, but there might be a more potent reason behind our chronic fatigue and lack of energy, a kidney disease! A kidney failure means a buildup of toxins and impurities

in the blood. Also, anemia is another complication which results as a result of a kidney disease; it also causes fatigue and weakness.

- **You have itchy skin and rashes-** When the toxic build up in your body increases manifold, the toxin accumulation can change the quality of your skin, you will find your skin getting drier, with dry patches everywhere. Healthy kidneys perform many important functions; they remove the wastes and impurities from your blood, help make red blood cells, and keep your bones healthy as well. That is why osteoporosis or other bone malformations can be a result of kidney disease.

In fact, [dry and itchy skin prone](#) to rashes often can be attributed to a mineral and bone disease which is a result of a kidney disease. This is when the kidneys fail to maintain the balance of the right nutrients and minerals in your blood.



- **Nausea and vomiting-** Sometimes, an overdose of toxins in your blood can make you feel nauseated and make you expel the excess accumulated toxins, through your vomit. This happens when you are in the advanced stages of a kidney disease.
- **You feel the need to urinate more often-** Sometimes you might feel the need to urinate more often, especially at night. This is a telling sign of an underlying kidney disease. Having said that, frequent urination can also mean an enlarged prostate in men and urine infection in both men and women.
- **Blood in the urine-** Usually your kidneys filter out the blood and impurities from your body before they are dispelled out of your body via urine. But when the kidney filters are malfunctioning, the blood cells stream into the urine, thus you see blood in the urine. But blood in the urine is also indicative of other diseases like tumors, kidney stones, and infection. The more reason to rush to your doctor immediately for prompt treatment.
- **Puffiness in your eyes-** One of the tests that you must undergo for kidney trouble is protein in your urine. The more protein drained from your body, and into your urine, the more chances of your [eyes getting swollen and puffy](#).



- **Your urine turns foamy-** Excessive bubbles in your urine indicate that you have too much protein in your urine. This also ensures that you make frequent trips to the loo. A weird fact about this is that the protein which makes your eggs foamy, albumin, is exactly the same one you find in your urine! Too much protein in your urine is a symptom of kidney problems.
- **You have swollen hands and feet-** When your kidneys start malfunctioning, you end up retaining more sodium in the body, which causes swelling in your feet and ankles. Although, this symptom can be indicative of other problems such as chronic leg vein problems, liver disease, and heart ailments as well.
- **Your appetite suffers-** This is a symptom indicative of most diseases, as when you are suffering from any kind of chronic disease, the first thing to go is your appetite. The periodic toxic build-up in your body is usually the reason behind this. As your kidneys do not function optimally, your toxins do not drain out as they should, which causes the loss of appetite.



- **Muscle cramps-** When there is an electrolyte imbalance in your body, there are chances that you may suffer from muscle cramps. It is especially true when you have low calcium and phosphorous levels. Low levels of these essential minerals can cause an imbalance in electrolyte function and cause muscle cramps.

The Main Causes of Kidney Failure

We now know that kidneys are the organs that help filter out the impurities and waste products from the blood. Kidneys are actively involved in [regulating blood pressure levels](#), maintaining electrolyte balance, and activating red blood cell production in your body. So their importance in our body cannot be stressed enough. So why do you have a kidney failure? Can you prevent kidney diseases? All of that can be answered if you know the causes of a kidney disease.



- You may be suffering from a condition that is the reason for sluggish blood flow to your kidneys.
- Any treatment or particular condition which happens to damage your kidneys.
- The kidney's urine drainage tubes, known as ureters, become blocked and the wastes are unable to leave your body via urine.
- The blood flow to the kidneys is blocked for some reason.

There are some diseases and conditions that may stop the blood flow to the kidneys and lead to malfunctioning of kidneys, such as:

- Blood loss or fluid loss.
- Certain blood pressure medication has a detrimental effect on your kidneys.
- Heart ailments
- Heart attack
- Liver diseases
- Certain infections
- Use of certain medications (that is why you must never resort to self-medication and strive to know more about the medications prescribed by your doctor, as some medications have detrimental effects on health)



- Severe burns
- Dehydration problems
- Cholesterol deposits that hinder blood flow to the kidneys
- Blood in arteries and veins in and around the kidneys
- Inflammation in the kidneys
- Auto-immune disease like lupus
- Certain osteoporosis medications
- Multiple myeloma
- Chemotherapy medications
- Too much alcohol consumption

Certain diseases like:

- Bladder Cancer
- Prostate Cancer
- Cervical Cancer
- Kidney Cancer
- Nerve damage
- Allergic reactions
- Hemolytic uremic syndrome, a condition where the red blood cells get destroyed.
- Nerve damage caused by certain diseases like diabetes.
- Inflammation of blood vessels known as Vasculitis.

Treatment Options for Kidney Failure

When you are already in the advanced stages of kidney failure, you have three treatment options to choose from, to filter your blood. Another option offers palliative care without replacing the work of the kidneys. However, none of these remedies can undo the damage done, they can just reduce the symptoms and make you feel better.



Hemodialysis is a treatment, which uses a machine to filter your blood through a filter to help remove waste. Peritoneal dialysis is another option where the lining of your belly is used again to filter your blood inside your body, removing the wastes.

Kidney transplantation is a surgery which takes place when the healthy kidneys of a person are transplanted in place of the damaged kidneys. The healthy kidneys are usually taken from a person who has just died or even a living person, who mostly happens to be a family member, into your body to reprise the work of filtering the blood.

Then there is conservative management, which is the choice of not going for either transplantation or dialysis. Instead, the focus is on using certain medications to keep you comfortable, preserving the kidney function through lifestyle modifications like making dietary changes, and treating the symptoms of kidney failure such as anemia, which is a shortage of red blood cells. Anemia not only makes you feel weak but also impacts your bones.

Prevent Kidney Disease

Acute kidney failure is very difficult to predict. But you may take steps to reduce the risk associated with kidney disease.



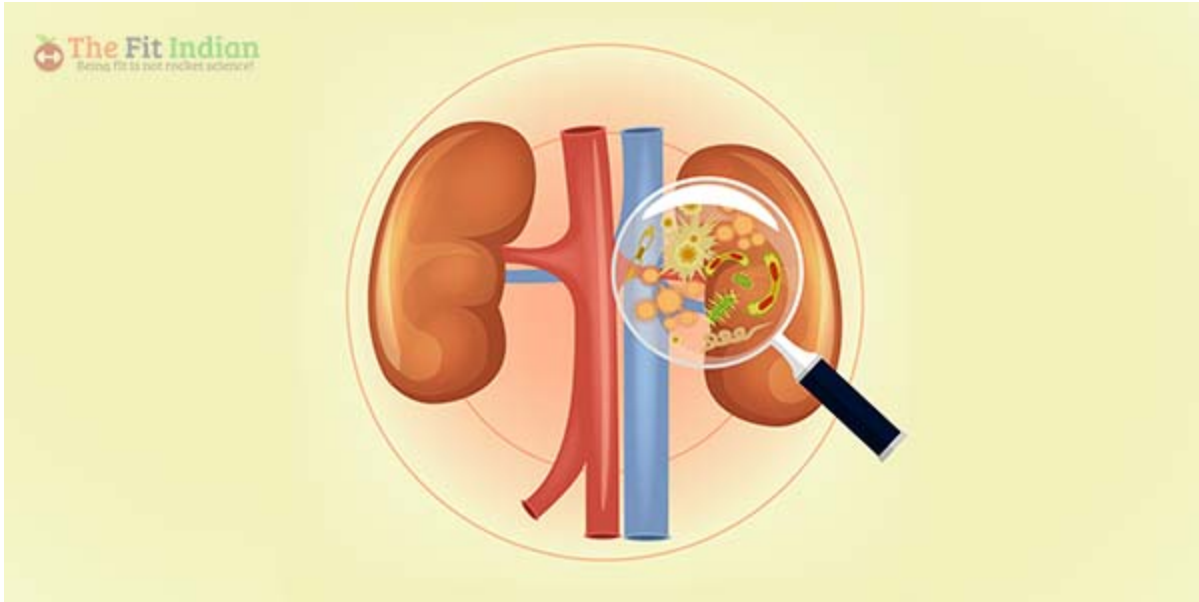
- **Read labels-** Yes, like your food packets, you need to be more aware of the medications you take, especially over the counter pain medications. The instructions you need to bear in mind as with the OTC pain medications are aspirin, acetaminophens such as Tylenol and ibuprofen. Overt consumption of these medications may up your risk of acute kidney failure. This is especially true if you have diabetes, high blood pressure or a pre-existing kidney disorder.
- **Manage your disease with the help of your doctors-** You need to be in talkswith your doctor to manage kidney problems. If you have diabetes or hypertension, make sure you get yourself tested regularly. Tracking the disease and managing the condition with your doctor can yield positive results and stop it from spiraling out of control.
- **A healthy lifestyle-** Eating right and exercising are the most effective ways of preventing kidney disease.

Dietary Guidelines to Prevent Kidney Disease

Diet plays an important role in preventing kidney disorders. Small tweaks, when followed persistently, can give you great results.



- **Reduce the intake of salt-** Modern day diet is riddled around packaged food. So we are largely unaware of the amount of salt we take until it affects our health. Limit your packaged food intake, better still, eat home cooked food, only then you will be able to control the amount of salt in your food.
- **Limit your red meat intake-** We all know protein is one of the building blocks of our body. But most of the time we overindulge in animal protein rich foods, thinking they will do good to our body when all they do is cause harm. Too much of red meat is harmful to our body as it is also high in saturated fat.
- **Avoid soda-** The drinks spiked with enormous amounts of sugar, like sodas, are high in calories and have zero nutrient value. Also, colas have preservatives and phosphorous-laden additives which can harm your kidneys.



- **Say good- bye to processed foods:** There are too many interesting foods crowding supermarket shelves, ranging from potato chips to crackers to cheese spreads, instant potato mix, the works. They are an embodiment of all things we should not eat, laden with phosphorous and salt, they are detrimental to our health in more ways than one.
- **Cut down on sugar-** Too much of sugar leads to diabetes and obesity, which are precursors of kidney disease, if not checked in time.

Is Exercising the Best Way to Avoid Kidney Disease?

You need to make healthier choices as far as food is concerned. Stay active, this holds true to preventing most chronic diseases, including kidney disease. [A balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables](#), whole-grains and the right quantity of protein all comprise a holistic approach to preventing diseases like kidney failure.



Exercise makes it easier to go about doing your chores, it provides you with the requisite energy to sail through the day.

Besides the increased energy, there are other benefits of exercise, such as:

- Improved endurance and muscle functioning
- Blood pressure levels stay under control
- Increased muscle strength
- Cholesterol and triglycerides stay under control
- Improved quality of sleep
- Body weight remains under control

Types of Exercise for Better Kidneys

Choosing cardiovascular exercises, or a continuous activity such as walking, swimming, bicycling (indoors or outdoors), aerobic dancing, skiing or any other activities in which you are required to move large muscle groups continuously is ideal.



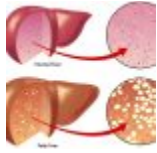
You can also include medium intensive [strengthening exercises](#), they can also be a beneficial part of your program. Without strength-training, your exercise regime is not complete.

The Duration of Exercise

Strive to include a 30-minute sweat session. Build up the intensity if you feel you can do more! But then you should listen to your body. If you feel fatigued and too out of breath, stop for a sip of water, if you feel up to it, continue. If not, then there is always tomorrow!

A kidney disease does not really mean writing on the wall! Follow a holistic approach in conjunction with your treatment to get relief from some of the most pressing **kidney problem symptoms**. A healthy lifestyle can combat a number of diseases. So, choose to live healthy and your body will certainly thank you for it!

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