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المبادئ الإرشادية السريرية لدولة قطر  
NATIONAL CLINICAL GUIDELINES FOR QATAR

# INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

## What to do if You or Someone You know Has Chronic Kidney Disease?

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## WHAT YOUR KIDNEYS DO?

Most people have two kidneys which are in the lower back under the bottom ribs. The kidneys perform the following functions in our body.

They:

- Remove waste products from the blood as urine.
- Regulate salt and water in the body.
- Activate vitamin D which helps keep our bones healthy
- Produce hormones that regulate blood pressure and red blood cells production.

## WHAT IS CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE?

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a long-standing condition in which the kidneys are unable to perform their normal function.

This means the kidneys cannot remove waste products from the body or perform some of the functions outlined above.

CKD can affect any age-group in both children and adults. Some people are born with it, while some develop it as they get older. It can also run in some families.

The severity of CKD varies from one affected person to another depending on the degree of kidney damage.

**Untreated, CKD can lead to a more serious condition known as End-Stage Renal Disease and even death.**

## WHAT CAUSES CKD?

CKD is usually caused by long-standing illnesses in the body which over time damage the kidneys.

The most common risk factors for CKD include:

- Diabetes.
- Hypertension.
- Inflammation in the kidneys (glomerulonephritis).
- Obstruction of urine outflow due to prostate problems or bladder cancer.
- Long term use of certain medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and lithium.
- Family history of kidney disease (Inherited kidney diseases).

## SYMPTOMS OF CKD

Most patients do not have symptoms in earlier stages.

Occasionally CKD is accidentally detected during screening or monitoring of high-risk conditions:

- Diabetes mellitus.
- Hypertension.

Symptoms may become evident when the affected person develops complications of decreased kidney function.

These include:

- Feeling sick, tiredness and low energy levels.
- Breathlessness (due to a build-up of fluid in the lungs).
- Poor appetite.
- Frequent urination at night or, in the later stages of CKD, passing very little urine.
- Headaches.
- Itching
- Aching bones and muscle cramps.

Additional signs and symptoms due to co-existing conditions or complications include:

## HOW IS CKD DIAGNOSED?

To diagnose CKD, your doctor will ask you questions about risk factors and symptoms, measure your blood pressure, and examine you. They will order some blood and urine tests.

You might also have these tests taken by chance for something else.

Once you are diagnosed, your doctor will determine your CKD stage by measuring the amount of creatinine, a waste product that builds up in kidney disease.

This test provides an estimate of your kidney function and is known as **estimated glomerular filtration rate** (e-GFR).

CKD is divided into 5 stages with stage 1 being least damaged and 5 the most damaged.

- High blood pressure (BP).
- Paleness.
- Swollen feet and ankles
- Puffiness around the eyes.
- Weight loss or weight gain.

Nausea and vomiting can occur with advanced CKD.

**Although you may have no symptoms from CKD, damage to the kidneys can affect your health.**

CKD can increase your risk of developing heart disease, hypertension or stroke. It is therefore important that you are seen regularly by either your doctor or kidney specialist if you have any of the above risk factors.

## SPECIALIST MANAGEMENT

If is CKD diagnosed, your doctor will refer you to a specialist for further treatment.

At the first visit, the kidney specialist will check for the cause of your CKD. On subsequent visits, your weight and blood pressure will be measured, and your urine sample will be tested for signs of blood, protein or infection.

You will have additional blood tests to assess your kidney functions, bone health, blood acidity levels and signs of anaemia.

The kidney specialist will:

- Discuss potential lifestyle changes that may slow the CKD progression.
- Assess and treat your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Treat any complications such as anaemia and mineral changes.
- Discuss the available specialised treatment options including:
  - o Kidney transplant therapy.
  - o Peritoneal dialysis.
  - o Haemodialysis.
  - o Conservative management



## IMPORTANT TIPS

- If you smoke - stop.
- Ensure your BP is well controlled by taking your medications as directed by your doctor.
- Reduce your dietary salt intake to less than 6g per day.
- Perform regular exercise and try to maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet, following the advice from your doctor and dietitian.
- Avoid medication that may worsen your condition such as NSAIDs.
- Whenever you are given a new drug, ask the pharmacist to confirm if it is appropriate for you to take, given your CKD.

**Referral to the kidney specialist for clinical assessment and treatment is normally required for patients with CKD.**

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

These include:

- **Peritoneal dialysis:**  
A soft tube (catheter), will be placed into your abdomen and connected to a dialysis machine. This helps to remove waste products that have built up in your bloodstream.
- **Haemodialysis**  
This works by removing blood from your body and passing it through a machine to get rid of the toxins.

Both treatments help relieve symptoms related to kidney failure including feeling sick or tired, puffy ankles, shortness of breath and protecting your bone strength.

- **Kidney transplants** involve surgical replacement of your kidney with a new kidney.  
Talk to your kidney team if you would like to have a kidney transplant. Not every person with CKD will be suitable for a transplant.

You will need to be moderately healthy to have the surgery and for your body to cope with the medications to prevent rejection of the new kidney.

You will need to have some tests to check whether you are healthy enough to have a transplant and to help match you with the best donor.

**People with CKD are prone to infections. It is important that you get your flu vaccine regularly and any other vaccine recommended by your doctor.**



**If you think you or your loved ones have CKD, see your doctor to be checked.**

Support and advice will be given to you by your doctor and the kidney specialist will help you decide what to do.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the diagnosis and management of CKD can be found in the National Clinical Guideline published by The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) Qatar.

The Guideline is available for public on MOPH website:  
[www.moph.gov.qa](http://www.moph.gov.qa)