

Acute Kidney Injury

Acute kidney injury is the sudden decrease in kidney function. If you have this condition, it means your kidneys can not perform the jobs the body expects them to do.

"They decrease in their function. That could go from 100 percent to zero percent or it could go from 100 percent down to 50 percent kidney function. It happens over a very short period of time, usually days to weeks is when that occurs." – Dr. Aaron Dall, Nephrologist/Kidney Specialist

With Acute Kidney Injury, the kidneys suddenly are unable to properly clean excess water and waste products from the blood. Toxins, water and other substances start to build up in the body and make a patient feel ill. There are many causes of Acute Kidney Injury.

"The number one typically is dehydration. If someone is dehydrated - they're at a warm baseball game, they're sweating and not getting enough fluid and getting dehydrated - that can lead to acute kidney injury." – Dr. Aaron Dall, Nephrologist/Kidney Specialist

Other causes of acute kidney injury include heart or liver failure, a urinary tract blockage, low blood pressure, overuse of pain medications, major surgery or it could result from other diseases.

"Things like autoimmune diseases like lupus or other diseases such as that could lead to more rapid decline in kidney function." – Dr. Aaron Dall, Nephrologist/Kidney Specialist

Symptoms of acute kidney injury can include an inability to urinate, swelling in your legs or around your eyes, fatigue, shortness of breath, confusion, nausea, seizures or chest pain or pressure. Sometimes, patients don't have any symptoms at all. Unlike chronic kidney disease, an acute kidney injury can be treated and, often, your kidney function restored.

"Patients may come into the hospital and they find out their kidney function is 50 percent of normal. They're treated with IV fluids and various other medications. By the time they leave the hospital their kidney function is near normal again." – Dr. Aaron Dall, Nephrologist/Kidney Specialist

In order to be treated for acute kidney injury, you'll have to stay in the hospital until your kidneys start to recover. In serious cases, you may need dialysis to help replace kidney function temporarily.

After having an acute kidney injury, your chances are higher for other health problems – including chronic kidney disease, stroke and heart disease, so following up with your healthcare provider is the best way to protect yourself. Should you notice any symptoms that point to a sudden loss of kidney function, contact your healthcare provider right away.