

# The Stages of Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease is a gradual loss of kidney function over time. Your kidneys keep you healthy by getting rid of waste and excess fluids in your body. In most cases, early on, patients don't have any symptoms.

"It's sort of a silent disease usually picked up on laboratory results."

There are five stages of Chronic Kidney Disease, each stage marking a drop in the kidneys' ability to filter waste from your blood. The best test for measuring how well, or how poorly, your kidneys are working is your Glomerular Filtration Rate or GFR.

"The first stage is a very normal kidney function with some abnormalities in the urine. The second stage is just a little bit lower kidney function. There may also be protein and blood in the urine. But just a slightly diminished kidney function usually something 90-60 percent of normal. Stage three is once again a decreased kidney function somewhere between 60 to 30 percent of normal kidney function."

Chronic kidney disease stages 4 and 5 are more advanced. Your kidney function falls below 30 percent and you'll start to feel symptoms.

"You'll have symptoms like fatigue, insomnia, decreased appetite. You can have things like metallic taste in your mouth and you can get itchiness of the skin. Oftentimes nausea is also associated with more advanced disease."

Stage five or end stage renal disease is when your kidney function drops below ten percent. At this point, serious intervention is the only way to stay alive...

For Nona Rowan, that meant two years of dialysis, and finally a kidney transplant...

"It's life changing. It's you know it's still I have to pinch myself some time and go. Did you really have a transplant."

"I had some testing done and of the new kidney. It is 87 percent functioning so that's pretty good."

Not everyone with chronic kidney disease needs to go on dialysis or have a kidney transplant.

"Patients with chronic kidney disease are oftentimes very concerned that when they come to see their kidney doctor that they're going to need dialysis immediately. But that is not the case. It is a small percent of patients with chronic kidney disease that end up progressing to stage 4 and then stage 5 chronic kidney disease and require dialysis or transplantation therapy."

You can help keep your chronic kidney disease from getting worse by paying attention to your body and keeping yourself healthy.

# The Stages of Kidney Disease

“Blood pressure control has been shown to really be the number one way we can control that declining kidney function. We want to get that under control as best we can. Part of that is maintaining a good diet and that diet is, of course, nutritious and low in sodium.”

Because the two main causes of chronic kidney disease are high blood pressure and diabetes, seeing your doctor regularly is important. He or she can tell if you're at risk by monitoring your blood pressure – or by taking urine or blood samples...

“Really their primary care doctor will help steer them towards the correct laboratory test to get that's usually on an annual to every other year basis just to see whether or not their function is stable or not.”

Your kidneys are vital to your overall well-being. Follow up with your healthcare provider regularly to take the steps you need for kidney health.