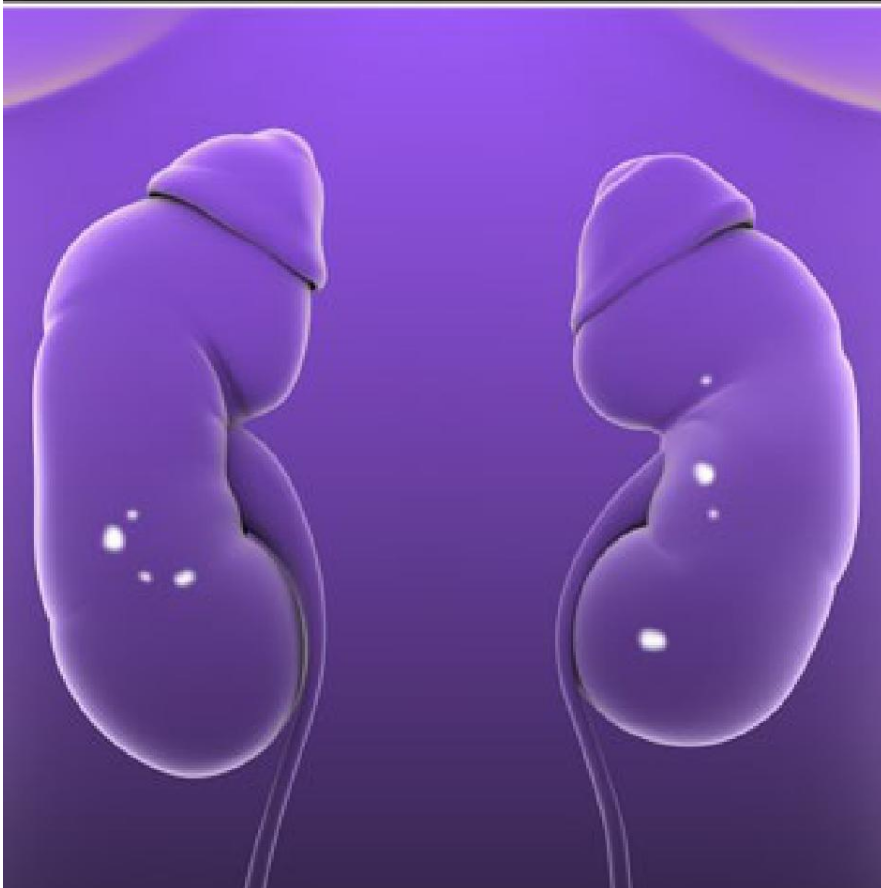




Kidney Stones



Overview

These are mineral deposits. They form in your kidneys (the organs that filter your blood to produce urine). They can cause excruciating pain, but typically they don't cause physical harm to your body.

Causes and Risk Factors

Kidney stones develop when minerals and salts from your blood stick together and crystallize. There are many different types of stones, and they can form from different substances. Certain factors can increase your risk for kidney stones. Your risk is higher if you eat a lot of salt, sugar or protein, and if you don't drink enough water. You have a higher risk if you have a personal or a family history of kidney stones. You have a higher risk if you are obese. And, certain diseases and medical conditions can increase your risk.

Symptoms

You can have stones in your kidneys and not have any symptoms. Small stones can pass out of your body through your urine stream without you noticing. But when a large stone leaves your kidney and gets stuck in your urinary tract, it can cause severe pain. You may feel sharp pain in your side and back. This can spread to your abdomen and groin. The pain may come in waves. You may feel a frequent urge to urinate, and urinating may be painful and difficult. Your urine may be bloody or cloudy. It may smell bad. You may develop a fever and chills.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on your needs. You may benefit from medications to control your pain, and by drinking lots of water to help pass the stone from your body. You may benefit from a medication that helps your body relax to pass the stone. If these aren't helpful, your stone can be broken into smaller pieces with a treatment that bombards the stone with sound waves that are passed through your body. A stone that is stuck may need to be removed surgically or with a scope inserted through your urethra. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.