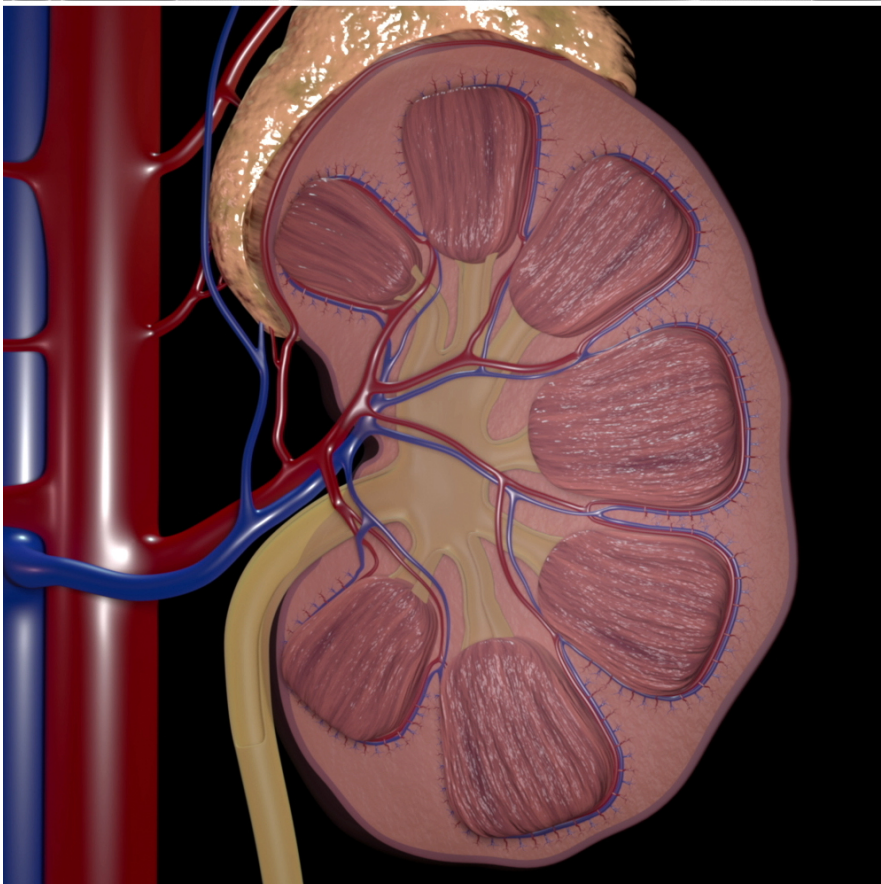




## What Do the Kidneys Do?



### Overview

The kidneys are a pair of bean-shaped organs at the back of your abdomen. They're found below your ribs on each side of your spine. Let's take a moment to learn more about these organs and what they do for the body.

### Healthy kidneys

Each kidney is about the size of a fist. They're connected to the circulatory system and the bladder. That's the organ that stores your urine. And on top of the kidneys are a pair of smaller glands called the "adrenals." They aren't actually part of the kidneys.

### The kidneys' role

The main job of the kidneys is to remove waste and extra fluid from your blood. They act as filters. They take in blood and clean it. Then, they send it back into your blood vessels. The waste and extra fluid the kidneys remove becomes urine, which flows to your bladder. The kidneys also maintain the balance of water, salts and minerals in your blood. And, they play a role in regulating blood pressure, making red blood cells and keeping your bones strong.

### Living without kidneys

Your kidneys are very important. If they ever stop working, you'll need to have frequent dialysis treatments to cleanse waste from your body. You may also be able to have a kidney transplant. That's a surgery where we take a healthy kidney from a donor and transfer it to your body. For more info about kidneys, talk to your doctor.