

7 Golden Rules

What can you do for your kidneys? Kidney diseases are silent killers, which will largely affect your quality of life. There are however several easy ways to reduce the risk of developing these kidney disease.

1. **Keeping fit and active.**
Keeping fit helps to reduce your blood pressure and therefore reduces the risk of Chronic Kidney Disease. The concept "on the move for kidney health" is a worldwide collective march involving the public, celebrities and professionals moving across a public area by walking, running and cycling. Why not join them - by whatever means you prefer! Check out the events section of the WKD website for more information.
2. **Keep regular control of your blood sugar level**
About half of people who have diabetes develop kidney damage, so it is important for people with diabetes to have regular tests to check their kidney functions. Kidney damage from diabetes can be reduced or prevented if detected early. It is important to keep control of blood sugar levels with the help of doctors or pharmacists, who are always happy to help.
3. **Monitor your blood pressure**
Although many people may be aware that high blood pressure can lead to a stroke or heart attack, few know that it is also the most common cause of kidney damage. The normal blood pressure level is 120/80. Between this level and 129/89, you are considered prehypertensive and should adopt lifestyle and dietary changes. At 140/90 and above, you should discuss the risks with your doctor and monitor your blood pressure level regularly. High blood pressure is especially likely to cause kidney damage when associated with other factors like diabetes, high cholesterol and Cardio- Vascular Diseases.
4. **Eat healthy and keep your weight in check**
This can help prevent diabetes, heart disease and other conditions associated with Chronic Kidney Disease. Reduce your salt intake. The recommended sodium intake is 5-6 grams of salt per day (around a teaspoon). In order to reduce your salt intake, try and limit the amount of processed and restaurant food and do not add salt to food. It will be easier to control your intake if you prepare the food yourself with fresh ingredients. For more information on nutrition and kidney friendly cooking, visit our nutrition page.
5. **Do not smoke**
Smoking slows the flow of blood to the kidneys. When less blood reaches the kidneys, it impairs their ability to function properly. Smoking also increases the risk of kidney cancer by about 50 percent.
6. **Do not take over-the-counter pills on a regular basis**
Common drugs such non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen are known to cause kidney damage and disease if taken regularly. Such medications probably do not pose significant danger if your kidneys are relatively healthy and you use them for emergencies only, but if you are dealing with chronic pain, such as arthritis or back pain, work with your doctor to find a way to control your pain without putting your kidneys at risk.
7. **Check your kidney function if you have one or more of the 'high risk' factors**
 - o you have diabetes
 - o you have hypertension
 - o you are obese
 - o you or one of your family members suffers from kidney disease
 - o you are of African, Asian, Aboriginals origin