

# Acute kidney injury: prevention, detection and management

Information for the public

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## Acute kidney injury: the care you should expect

Acute kidney injury means that the kidneys have suddenly stopped working properly (this used to be called 'acute renal failure'). Acute kidney injury can affect anyone, but it's more common in older people and people who are already unwell with other medical conditions. It can be caused by many things, such as dehydration, a serious infection, a blockage in the urinary tract or by taking certain medicines that can harm the kidneys. It can also happen during some scans or X-rays that use dye, for example to show blood flow in the heart or blood vessels. The kidneys stop harmful substances from building up in the body, so acute kidney injury can become life-threatening if it's not treated quickly.

We want this guideline to make a difference to adults, children and young people who have or are at risk of acute kidney injury by making sure:

- symptoms of acute kidney injury are spotted and treated earlier
- the cause of an acute kidney injury is diagnosed quickly and accurately so that people get the right care
- people at risk of acute kidney injury are closely monitored for kidney problems, especially if they are in hospital or they are having a scan or X-ray with dye that could affect their kidneys
- people can see a specialist without delay when they need to
- people who have had acute kidney injury are given advice on how to avoid it happening again.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

They should also:

- discuss with you the different options for treating acute kidney injury
- give you full information and support to make decisions about your care if you need dialysis (where a machine artificially removes waste products from the blood) while your kidneys recover
- explain what you can do yourself to help your recovery and what to expect in the future.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about acute kidney injury.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Kidney Care UK](#), 01420 541424
- [Kidney Research UK](#), 0300 303 1100
- [Kidney Wales \(Aren Cymru\)](#), 029 20 343 940
- [National Kidney Federation \(NKF\)](#), 0800 169 09 36

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by acute kidney injury and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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