

Chronic kidney disease: assessment and management

Information for the public

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Chronic kidney disease: the care you should expect

Chronic kidney disease (often shortened to CKD) is a long-term condition in which the kidneys do not work as well as they should. It is common, especially in older people. In the early stages, there are usually few symptoms and people often have the condition without knowing it. CKD is often caused by other conditions that affect the kidneys. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and kidney infections. Making healthy lifestyle choices and controlling underlying conditions are important. CKD can get worse over time but treatments can stop or delay this, and many people live for a long time with their condition well controlled.

We want this guideline to make a difference by making sure that:

- tests and monitoring for CKD are offered so that more people are diagnosed earlier
- specialist care is offered to people who need it and unnecessary referrals to specialists are avoided
- better lifestyle advice and treatment help people to stop or delay their CKD getting worse
- related health problems such as high blood phosphate levels and low blood iron (anaemia) are always recognised and treated.

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.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of your treatment and care?
- Are there any lifestyle choices you can make to help your condition?
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to treatments that worry you more than others?
- How will the treatment affect your day to day life?
- What happens if you don't want to have treatment?

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 chronic kidney disease.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Kidney Care UK](#), 01420 541 424
- [Kidney Research UK](#), 0300 303 1100
- [Kidney Wales](#), 02920 343940
- [National Kidney Federation](#), 0800 169 09 36
- [Polycystic Kidney Disease \(PKD\) Charity UK](#), 0300 111 1234

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 chronic kidney disease and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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