

What will happen to me?

- if your kidney failure is mild and treated properly the kidney failure may not worsen
 - in severe kidney failure however the kidney failure may continue to worsen even with proper treatment
 - if this happens you may need to prepare for dialysis
 - if you require dialysis it is important that the preparation be done early. Discuss with your doctor.
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- Information on dialysis and transplant is also available

KIDNEY FAILURE

When you are told to have kidney failure for the first time it is natural to feel scared, angry or to disbelieve the diagnosis

What is kidney failure?

- your kidneys are not working properly to filter out toxins
- toxins in your blood will build up

How do I know if I have kidney failure?

symptoms of kidney failure are often vague and happens late

- feeling tired, less energetic
- becoming pale
- itchy, dry or darkening of the skin
- swelling in the feet or puffiness in the face
- poor appetite
- nausea, vomiting
- breathless

How can I have kidney failure when I feel fine?

- people with mild kidney failure often feel normal
- kidney failure is often detected only during medical examination, urine or blood tests
- many do not feel ill until the kidneys have almost completely failed

Are you sure that I have kidney failure?

- the level of toxins (*Urea* and *Creatinine*) in the blood will be high
- ultrasound may also show “bright” and shrunken kidneys

How can I have kidney failure when I can still pass urine?

- most patients can still pass some urine even when the kidney failure is very bad
- it can take several years on dialysis before you completely stop passing urine

How can I have kidney failure if the ultrasound is normal?

- ultrasound is not sensitive at picking up early kidney failure
- the kidneys will become small only after the kidney damage has been present for a long time so a normal ultrasound does not always mean that the kidneys are normal

Have both of my kidneys failed?

- Yes, for toxins to build up in your blood both kidneys must be damaged

I have heard of people recovering from kidney failure.

- there are two types of kidney failure – acute and chronic kidney failure
- in the acute type the kidney stops functioning suddenly but in many cases the kidney may recover
- in chronic renal failure the kidney damage cannot be reversed even with medication

What are the treatments available?

- discuss with your doctor
- some kidney diseases can be cured if detected and treated early
- however treatment will not cure any damage already present in the kidneys

What can be done for me?

- we may be able keep your kidney function steady or make your kidney last longer
- strict blood pressure control is very important
- certain high blood pressure medication may be better than others at protecting your kidneys. Discuss with your doctor.

What else can I do?

- avoid medication that may make your kidney worse for example pain killers or some traditional medications
- exercise regularly
- stop smoking
- blood sugar should be well controlled if you have diabetes

Do I need to change my diet?

- avoid taking excessive amounts of protein as this may worsen your kidney function more quickly
- do not take vegetables rich in protein for example beans, tau hoo etc.
- however be careful not to over restrict protein without consulting your doctor or dietitian
- reduce your salt and fat intake
- if you are over weight reduce your calorie intake and exercise

Can I just buy medicine from the pharmacy?

- you need regular check-ups even if you have mild kidney failure
- check-ups are very important to check your blood pressure and kidney function
- it may be too late to do anything if you wait until you become ill
- discuss with your doctor about how often you need to go for check-ups

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