

# Chronic Kidney Disease

## INTRODUCTION (VIDEO [LINK](#))

- Most people have two kidneys located in their lower back, either side of your spine.
- Each kidney is about the same size as a fist and shaped like a bean.
- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is where your kidneys are not working as well as they used to, so cannot do all the important jobs they need to.
- Chronic means it is a long-term condition.



## What do Kidneys do? (VIDEO [LINK](#))

- The kidneys have lots of jobs to do in our body, some of the main ones are:
  - Filtering the blood to remove waste products and water to make urine,
  - Help to regulate blood pressure,
  - Control how much fluid is in your body,
  - Control the amount of substances like salt and potassium to keep them at healthy levels,
  - Activate vitamin D,
  - Regulate red blood cell production.



***Did you know your kidneys filter 180 litres of blood every day? That is the equivalent of 720 cups of tea!***

## What causes Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

- CKD can be caused by diseases, damage or just aging.
- Some of the conditions that can make you more at risk of CKD are:
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Having had a heart attack or stroke
- Some medicines can also cause damage to the kidneys, such as anti-inflammatories if taken at a high dose for a long time.

## What are the symptoms of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?

- Most people don't get any symptoms until their kidney disease has become severe.
- Common symptoms include tiredness, having less energy, feeling sick, dry/itchy skin, muscle cramps, swollen feet or ankles, blood in the wee, or foamy wee.

***Did you know you can lose 90% of your Kidney function without knowing?***

## PATHWAYS TO TESTING, REFERRAL, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- All patients in at-risk groups should have annual screening for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). At risk groups include patients with:
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Previous heart attack or stroke.
  - If you are not sure if you are at risk of kidney disease you can use the link below to fill out a short questionnaire. If you need screening this will provide you with a letter you can show your GP to request the tests.

<https://kidneycareuk.org/kidney-health-checker/>



***Screening should include a blood test and a urine test; it is really important to have both tests to give a full picture of your kidney health. See the links to videos below for more information about the tests.***

- In the early stages of CKD you would normally be managed by your GP practice, this could be the GP or another clinician with training in CKD, such as a pharmacist or nurse.
- You may be referred to a Nephrologist (kidney doctor) depending on the level your kidneys are working at or if there are other complications.

## OTHER WAYS TO REDUCE RISK AND SYMPTOMS (VIDEO [LINK](#))



- Lifestyle changes can reduce the risk of Chronic Kidney Disease including healthy balanced diet, keeping active, stopping smoking and reducing alcohol intake.
  - [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/)
  - [www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/)
  - [www.northamptonshiresport.org](http://www.northamptonshiresport.org) 01604 389976
  - [www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/)
  - [www.westnorthants.gov.uk/stop-smoking-drug-and-alcohol-support](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/stop-smoking-drug-and-alcohol-support)
  - Free stop smoking service, West Northamptonshire: 0300 126 5700 option 1
- Share the information in this sheet with family, friends and other people you know.

## OTHER SOURCES OF HELP, INFORMATION AND PEER SUPPORT

Kidney Care UK	<a href="http://www.kidneycareuk.org">www.kidneycareuk.org</a>	0808 801 00 00
National Kidney Federation	<a href="http://www.kidney.org.uk">www.kidney.org.uk</a>	0800 169 09 36
Kidney Research UK	<a href="http://www.kidneyresearchuk.org">www.kidneyresearchuk.org</a>	0300 303 11 00
Videos on kidney health and tests	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@LeicesterHospitalsNHS">https://www.youtube.com/@LeicesterHospitalsNHS</a>	