



A TO Z HEALTH GUIDE

Kidney Disease: Causes

Your kidneys may be small, but they perform many vital functions that help maintain your overall health, including filtering waste and excess fluids from your blood. Serious kidney disease may lead to complete kidney failure and the need for dialysis treatments or a kidney transplant to stay alive. While effective treatments are available for many kidney diseases, people are sometimes unaware that kidney disease can often be prevented. The following are the ten major causes of kidney disease.

In the United States the two leading causes of kidney failure, also called end stage kidney disease or ESRD, are diabetes (also called Type 2, or adult onset diabetes) and high blood pressure. When these two diseases are controlled by treatment, the associated kidney disease can often be prevented or slowed down.

Many effective drugs are available to treat high blood pressure. In addition, healthy lifestyle changes, such as losing weight and regular exercise, often help to control, and may even help to prevent, high blood pressure.

Careful control of blood sugar in diabetics helps to prevent such complications as kidney disease, coronary heart disease and stroke. When diabetics have associated high blood pressure, special drugs called angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors may help to protect their kidney function.

The third leading cause of end stage kidney disease in the U.S. is glomerulonephritis, a disease that damages the kidneys' filtering units, called the glomeruli. In many cases, the cause of this disease is not known, but some cases may be inherited and others may be triggered by an infection.

Some of the other diseases that may affect the kidneys include infections, kidney stones and inherited diseases such as polycystic kidney disease. The kidneys can also be damaged by overuse of some over-the-counter pain killers and by taking illegal drugs such as heroin. Some of these diseases can be cured. In other cases, treatments can help to slow the disease and prolong life.

End stage kidney disease occurs when about 90 percent of kidney function has been lost. People with kidney failure may experience nausea, vomiting, weakness, fatigue, confusion, difficulty concentrating and loss of appetite. It can be diagnosed by blood and urine tests.

If you would like more information, please [contact us](#).

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