

## Caring for Your Kidneys



The kidney is an essential organ for the proper functioning of the body. Its main role is to filter the blood and remove waste products and toxic substances. Taking care of kidney health is important to prevent diseases that can negatively affect quality of life.

### What are the kidneys?

The kidneys are two bean-shaped organs located in the lower back.

For the body to function properly, it is necessary to have at least one healthy kidney.

The kidneys' most important job is to filter waste products from the blood.

When the kidneys stop working, fluid and waste build up in the body; this is known as kidney failure. The most common treatments are dialysis or a kidney transplant.

### How to protect kidney health

- **Eat healthy foods:** Avoid foods that can affect the kidneys' ability to filter the blood and remove waste from the body.
- **Choose low-sodium foods:** Too much salt can raise blood pressure. Avoid adding salt to your meals and choose products labeled "reduced sodium" or "low sodium."
- **Reduce sugar intake:** Too much sugar has been linked to diabetes, a condition that can damage the kidneys.
  - Drink more water instead of sugary drinks: Choose water over sodas or beverages high in sugar.

- **Watch how much protein you eat:** Eating too much protein can strain the kidneys because it makes them work harder than necessary.
  - Ask your doctor about the right amount for you: The ideal amount of protein depends on factors like your body mass index.

### How to keep the kidneys active

Staying physically active is good for overall health. It also supports proper kidney function and can help prevent kidney damage.

- **Activities like walking, swimming, dancing, or biking** help improve blood sugar levels and blood pressure. They also lower cholesterol and help maintain a healthy weight.
- **Exercise** at least 30 minutes a day, three times a week.
- **Talk to your doctor before starting any exercise routine.** A healthcare professional can guide you on which activities are right for you and how often you should do them.



### What are the risk factors?

Diabetes and high blood pressure are two of the main risk factors for developing kidney disease. Other factors that also increase the risk include:

- Heart disease
- Family history of kidney disease
- Kidney infections or kidney stones
- Autoimmune diseases, such as lupus
- Smoking or using illegal drugs
- Obesity
- Enlarged prostate
- Aging



### Talk to your doctor

The only way to know how well your kidneys are working is through medical tests.

- Ask your doctor for blood and urine tests.
- These results help evaluate how well your kidneys are functioning.
- Have these tests done every year, or more often if the results show protein in your urine or if there is any sign that your kidneys may not be working properly.



### Additional recommendations

- Use medications only as directed.
- Avoid taking medicines that were not prescribed for you or that belong to someone else.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Quit smoking or using tobacco products.

**Be the leader in caring for your health.** Ask your doctor about the different ways to take care of your kidneys.



You are the most important person in managing your health. No one can do it better than you.

### Social and Emotional Aspects

For tips, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following phone lines:

#### Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

**APS Health**

787-641-9133

### References:

<https://www.kidneyfund.org/es/todo-sobre-los-rinones>

<https://www.kidneyfund.org/es/todo-sobre-los-rinones/la-prevencion-de-la-enfermedad-renal>

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