

What if there is still evidence of kidney damage?

If your blood tests show that your kidney function is less than 60% efficient at least three months after your illness (known as eGFR less than 60), then this is known as Chronic Kidney Disease. Chronic means more long term and in this case more than three months. Your GP will identify this and it will be recorded for future reference and decision making. It is important that you have your blood pressure and urine checked at least once a year for this condition. You may also be at a higher risk of developing another Acute Kidney Injury.



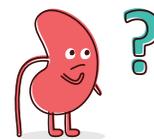
Can I do anything to improve my kidney function?

Our kidneys are very hard working organs. It is only when they fall below 5% efficiency that they may need help. This will involve a treatment called dialysis. There are some important things which you can do at an earlier stage to help them. This involves healthy living with a healthy weight, lowering salt intake or using low salt alternatives in your diet and not smoking. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure having good control of these can help stabilise kidney function. Your doctor or nurse can advise you about this. If you have been taking regular non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, you may be offered an alternative treatment.



I have more questions. What should I do next?

If you have more questions to ask about Acute Kidney Injury you should make an appointment to discuss these with your doctor.



Your doctor will arrange follow up blood tests to assess the recovery of your kidney function. You can ask for the blood test results and see how they change. You should also ask to have your blood pressure checked. Your medications should be reviewed and the doses may need to be adjusted. You may be warned about the use of ibuprofen and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.



It is important that you understand which of your regular medications may have an impact on kidney function.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Kidney Care UK, British Kidney Patient Association: Understanding Acute Kidney Injury, available online: <https://www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk/aki/think-kidney-publications/>



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Best Care for Everyone

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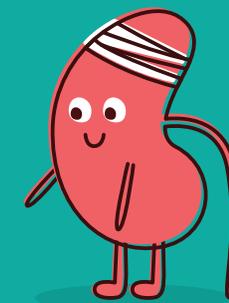
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Best Care for Everyone

Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)

Information for patients following AKI

What you need to know

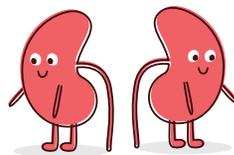


Understanding Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)

This leaflet is for people who *have been told they have had* Acute Kidney Injury. It has been designed to answer questions you may have about this condition.

What do the kidneys do?

The kidneys perform five important tasks for the body:

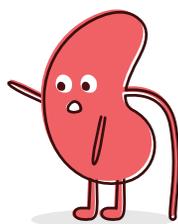


1. They remove waste products and toxins from the body, including drugs, by making urine.
2. They control fluid balance, making sure that we are not overloaded with water or dehydrated.
3. They control blood pressure, keeping it at the right level for body functions.
4. They make vitamin D, which is needed for bone growth.
5. They make a hormone called erythropoietin, which assists the production of red blood cells for delivery of oxygen throughout the body.

When you have Acute Kidney Injury, some or all of these functions may not work as well as normal.



Blood Pressure



What is Acute Kidney Injury?

- ‘Acute’ is a term used to describe something that has occurred over a short time, such as hours or days.
- ‘Kidney Injury’ describes evidence of damage to the kidneys usually with a change in the way the kidney is working, what we call kidney function.



✘ **The best ways to assess kidney function are to measure a waste product in the blood called creatinine and to measure how much urine you are producing.**

How do doctors know that I have had Acute Kidney Injury?

You have probably had a recent illness where you were unable to drink or eat properly, such as food poisoning or gastroenteritis, or after an operation. Your blood pressure may have been low and you may not have been passing urine like usual. Your blood test will show an increased level of creatinine. From this the doctors can decide if you have Acute Kidney Injury. Your urine test may also show some blood or protein.



What should I do if this happens again?

If you are unwell and unable to drink properly, particularly if you are losing extra fluid through vomiting or diarrhoea, or you have a high temperature and sweats, **then it is important that you discuss your condition with a medical professional.** This may be your GP or a specialist nurse, for example a heart failure or kidney nurse if you have one. You may be advised to stop taking medications which lower your blood pressure and treat diabetes. A blood test will be arranged to check your kidney function. **If you are admitted to hospital for an x-ray, radiology scan or operation, you should make your health care team aware you have had Acute Kidney Injury.**



Will my kidneys be damaged forever?

With early treatment you may only have suffered mild kidney damage. If you had healthy kidneys before the illness and no underlying health problems it is likely that your kidney function will improve and you should have no further problems. However, if you were very unwell, and had severe kidney function changes, it may not return to normal. This is particularly an issue if you have previous evidence of kidney problems known as Chronic Kidney Disease.

