



Royal Free London
NHS Foundation Trust

How to look after your kidneys

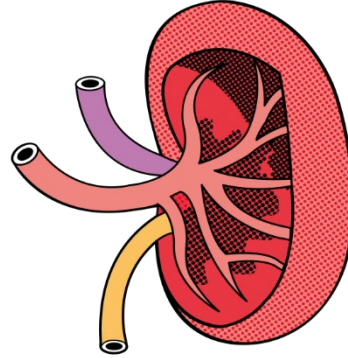
Information for patients and carers

This leaflet answers common questions about how to look after your kidneys.

If you would like further information, or have any worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

What do your kidneys do?

- Your kidneys make urine (pee).
- They take away waste from your blood.
- They control the amount of water in your body.



How do we find out that you have a kidney problem?

- We can measure the amount of waste in your blood.
- We can measure the amount of protein in your urine.

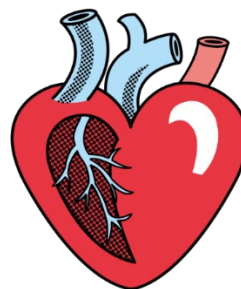


What causes kidney problems?

- Damaged blood vessels in your kidneys can stop them working properly.
- This is often caused by diabetes or high blood pressure and can also happen as we get older.

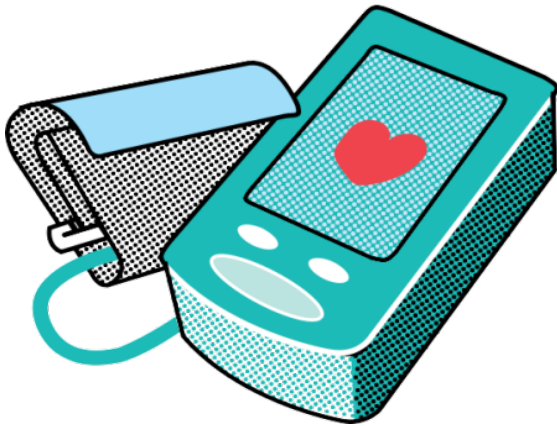
Why does it matter?

- Things that help your kidneys can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. You can reduce this risk by looking after yourself.

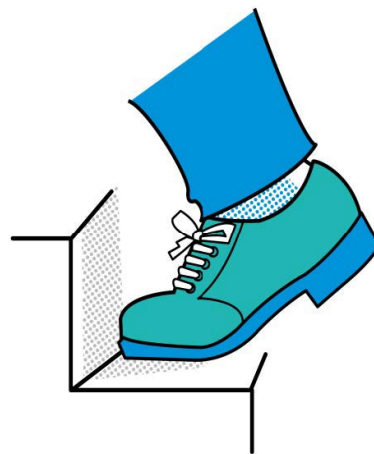


You can help your kidneys by:

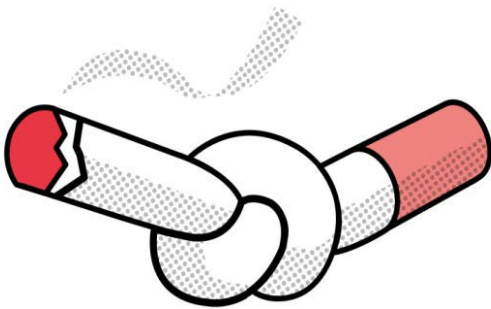
Controlling blood pressure



Exercising



Stopping Smoking



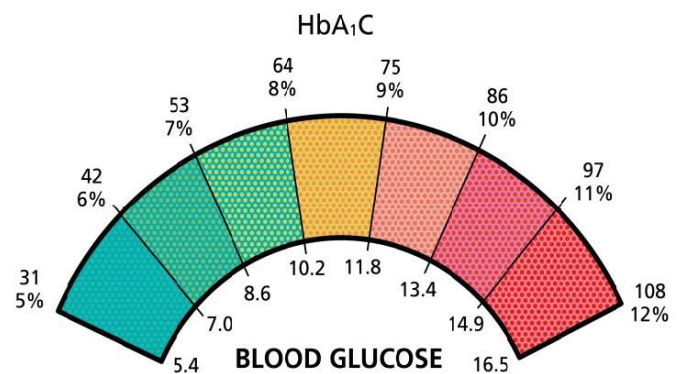
Eating healthy food



Cutting down on salt



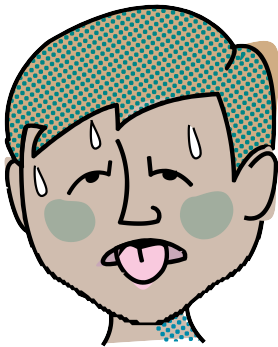
Controlling your blood sugar (if you have diabetes)



What should I do if I'm unwell?

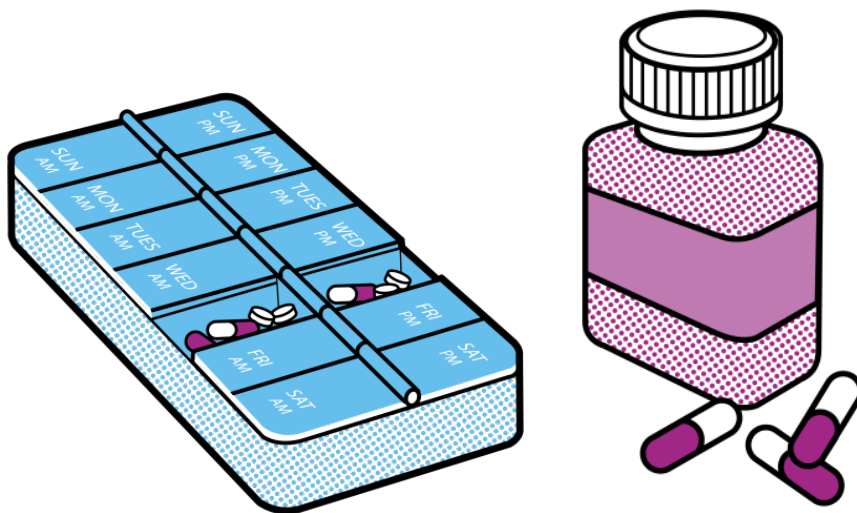
If you have vomiting, infection, or diarrhoea, drink more water.

Speak to your pharmacist, practice nurse or GP if this lasts more than 24 hours.



Taking care of my tablets

- Let your GP know if your tablets don't suit you.
- Before you start taking any new tablets, check with your GP or a pharmacist who knows you.
- People with chronic kidney disease (CKD) should not take anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or diclofenac.

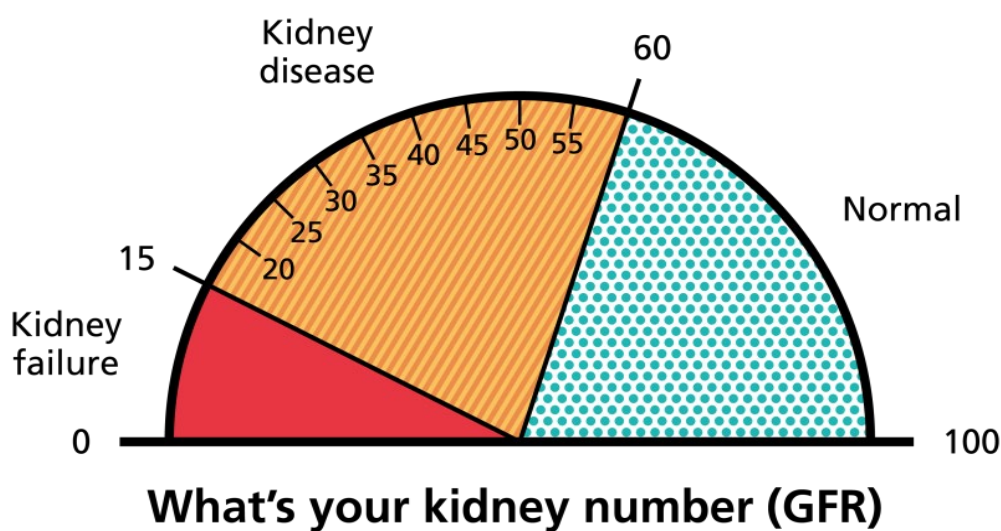


What is my kidney number (GFR)?

The glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is a measure of how well the kidneys are working. The number relates to the percentage of kidney function. The higher the number the better.

Your GFR results may show one of the following:

- Normal—you probably don't have kidney disease
- Below normal—you may have kidney disease
- Far below normal—you may have kidney failure



Do you know your:

- Kidney number
- Blood pressure
- HbA1c

Use this page to keep a record of your results and targets

Blood pressure target:		HbA1c target:	
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Date	Blood pressure	eGFR	HbA1C (if you have diabetes)

My goals

You can use this section to write down your goals to improve your kidney health, for example I would like to be more active.

Notes

Further information

You can find more information about how to look after your kidneys on the following websites:

- Kidney Care UK www.kidneycareuk.org/
- Think Kidneys www.thinkkidneys.nhs.uk
- Kidney Patient Guide www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk/
- Kidney Beam www.beamfeelgood.com/kidney-disease

For more information about the kidney services at the Royal Free London, please visit our website at:

www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/kidney-services/

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the East London Community Kidney Service at Barts Health NHS trust for allowing us to use their illustrations and adapt their booklet. All illustrations are the copyright of East London Community Kidney Service.

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a full list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please ask a member of staff.

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