

# DIABETES

*the facts about*

## Diabetes and your kidneys



### Why kidneys are important

- Your kidneys help to clean your blood. They remove waste from the blood and pass it out of the body as urine.
- Your kidneys help to balance the salt, water and other chemical levels in your body.
- Your kidneys help to keep your blood pressure in check.

### Who is at risk of getting kidney problems?

- People with uncontrolled blood glucose (sugar) levels (BGLs).
- People with untreated high blood pressure.
- People with high cholesterol (blood fat) levels.
- People who smoke.
- People who have kidney problems in their family.



DIABETES  
AUSTRALIA  
New South Wales

For further information call  
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## What can happen to kidneys?

Over time, diabetes can cause damage to the kidneys. This can make the kidneys leaky.

- Your kidneys can also be damaged by high blood pressure.
- You won't know if your kidneys are in trouble until the damage is done. There are special tests that can show early kidney trouble.

## What kinds of tests are done?

A urine test called a "microalbumin test" shows if the kidneys are leaky. This test looks for tiny pieces of protein that are lost through the kidneys. To do this test you will have to take a urine sample (sometimes a 12 or 24 hour collection) to the clinic or lab. Your doctor should arrange this test to be done at least once a year.

- Sometimes special blood tests need to be done. These can show if there is a build up of wastes in the blood.

## Are there ways to prevent kidney problems?

It is important to keep your blood glucose levels in check. Remember to take your diabetes tablets or insulin.

- Have your blood pressure checked every time you see your doctor, or educator. Take your blood pressure tablets if you are supposed to.
- Have your cholesterol level checked at least once a year
- Eat healthy foods and do regular physical activity.
- Drink plenty of water.
- If you smoke, seek help to quit.

## Bladder and Kidney Infections

These infections can be a problem for people with diabetes and can cause kidney damage too.

- These infections are more likely to happen in people who have high blood glucose levels (BGLs), who aren't active and who have bladder trouble.

## What are the signs of kidney damage?

- Tiredness.
- Swollen ankles.
- Shortness of breath.
- Loss of appetite.

***Signs don't happen until the kidneys are badly damaged. So it is important to have regular blood pressure and kidney checks.***

## Is there treatment for kidney problems?

- If you have kidney problems tablets can slow down this damage.
- If you also have high blood pressure you will need to take these tablets as well.
- Some people need to have dialysis at home or in a hospital or clinic if their kidneys are badly damaged.
- Kidney transplant is also an option.

***Your kidneys are important for good health. Remember, you won't know you have kidney problems until the damage is done, so make sure you have your diabetes in control and have your blood pressure and kidney checks done.***

