

Causes of Chronic Kidney Disease

Diabetes and high blood pressure are the most common causes of chronic kidney disease (CKD). Your health care provider will look at your health history and may do tests to find out why you have kidney disease. The cause of your kidney disease may affect the type of treatment you receive.

Diabetes

Too much glucose, also called sugar, in your blood damages your kidneys' filters. Over time, your kidneys can become so damaged that they no longer do a good job filtering wastes and extra fluid from your blood.

Often, the first sign of kidney disease from diabetes is protein in your urine. When the filters are damaged, a protein called [albumin](#), which you need to stay healthy, passes out of your blood and into your urine. A healthy kidney doesn't let albumin pass from the blood into the urine.

Diabetic kidney disease is the medical term for kidney disease caused by diabetes.

High blood pressure

[High blood pressure](#) can damage [blood vessels](#) in the kidneys so they don't work as well. If the blood vessels in your kidneys are damaged, your kidneys may not work as well to remove wastes and extra fluid from your body. Extra fluid in the blood vessels may then raise blood pressure even more, creating a dangerous cycle.

More information is provided in the NIDDK health topic, [High Blood Pressure and Kidney Disease](#).

High blood pressure can damage blood vessels in your kidneys.

Other causes of kidney disease

Other causes of kidney disease include

- a [genetic disorder](#) that causes many cysts to grow in the kidneys, [polycystic kidney disease \(PKD\)](#).
- an infection
- a drug that is toxic to the kidneys
- a disease that affects the entire body, such as diabetes or [lupus](#) [NIH](#) [↗](#). [Lupus nephritis](#) is the medical name for kidney disease caused by lupus
- [IgA glomerulonephritis](#)
- disorders in which the body's immune system attacks its own cells and organs, such as [Anti-GBM \(Goodpasture's\) disease](#)
- [heavy metal poisoning, such as lead poisoning](#) [NIH](#) [↗](#)
- rare genetic conditions, such as [Alport syndrome](#) [NIH](#) [↗](#)
- [hemolytic uremic syndrome in children](#)
- [IgA vasculitis](#)
- [renal artery stenosis](#)

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