

Preventing Kidney Stones



If you've had a kidney stone, you may worry that you'll have another. Removing or passing your stone doesn't prevent future stones. But with your healthcare provider's help, you can reduce your risk of forming new stones. Follow up with your healthcare provider to help find new stones. Depending on your medical condition, you may need to follow up every 3 to 12 months for the rest of your life.

Drink lots of water

Staying well-hydrated is the best way to reduce your risk of future stones. Drink 8 12-ounce glasses of water daily. Have 2 with each meal and 2 between meals. Keep track of your intake. Try keeping a pitcher of water nearby during the day and at night. Ask your healthcare provider about how much fluid you should have if you have kidney disease or kidney failure.



Take medicines if needed

Medicines, including vitamins and minerals, may be prescribed for certain types of stones. You may want to write your doses and medicine times on a calendar. Some medicines decrease stone-forming chemicals in your blood. Others help prevent those chemicals from crystallizing in urine. Still others help keep a normal acid balance in your urine.

Follow your prescribed diet

Your healthcare provider will tell you which foods contain the chemicals you should not have. Your healthcare provider may also suggest talking with a dietitian. They can help you plan meals you'll enjoy that won't put you at risk for future stones. Bring your spouse, partner, or close friend with you when you meet with the dietitian so you can have support for your diet changes.

You may be told to limit certain foods, depending on which type of stones you've had. You should limit the amount of salt in your food to about 2 grams a day. This will help prevent most types of kidney stones. Make sure you get an adequate amount of calcium in your diet.

For calcium oxalate stones: Limit animal protein, such as meat, eggs, and fish. Limit grapefruit juice and alcohol. Limit high-oxalate foods (such as cola, tea, chocolate, spinach, rhubarb, wheat bran, and peanuts).

For uric acid stones: Limit high-purine foods, such as mushrooms, peas, beans, anchovies, meat, poultry, shellfish, and organ meats. These foods increase uric acid production.

For cystine stones: Limit high-methionine foods (fish is the most common, but include eggs and meats, too). These foods increase production of cystine.

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