

# Coping with Kidney Failure



Having kidney failure means many changes in your health and life. It may feel like too much to cope with at times. But you can learn how to deal with these emotions and feel better about your treatment and yourself. Learning as much as you can about kidney failure is a good place to start. Kidney failure is also called chronic kidney disease. It has 5 stages, from mild to severe. This is based on whether your kidneys are leaking protein and how well they are filtering your blood.

## Understanding your emotions

Living with kidney failure can be very stressful. It's common at times to feel:

- Angry and frustrated over having to depend on others.
- Confused about all the instructions you've been given.
- Worried about things going wrong with your treatment.
- Upset with side effects of kidney failure or the treatment for it.
- Hopeless and depressed about the new limits to your life and your future.
- Unhappy with your body.

Don't keep these feelings to yourself. Talk with your healthcare team and your loved ones. They may know ways to help.

## Accepting your body's changes

Kidney failure and its treatment cause changes in your body. These changes can affect the way you feel about your sexuality. Your desire for and feelings about sex may change. Be open with your partner about your feelings and talk with your healthcare providers. They can help you understand your body's changes.

## Finding support

You may find it hard to ask others for help. But it's also hard to face a chronic illness alone. When you need some help or just want to talk, turn to friends, family, and members of your healthcare team. Also consider joining a support group. Here, people meet to talk about common problems. Ask your healthcare provider if there are kidney failure support groups nearby for you and your family.



## To learn more

These organizations can give you more information on kidney failure. They may also guide you to local resources, such as support groups.

- [American Association of Kidney Patients at www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org) or 800-749-2257
- [American Kidney Fund at www.akfinc.org](http://www.akfinc.org) or 866-300-2900
- [National Kidney Foundation at www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org) or 800-622-9010
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. National Kidney Disease Education Program at www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov) or 800-860-8747

## How daily issues affect your health

Many things in your daily life impact your health. This can include transportation, money problems, housing, access to food, and child care. If you can't get to medical appointments, you may not receive the care you need. When money is tight, it may be difficult to pay for medicines. And living far from a grocery store can make it hard to buy healthy food.

If you have concerns in any of these or other areas, talk with your healthcare team. They may know of local resources to assist you. Or they may have a staff person who can help.

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