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Kidney Failure

Also called: End-stage renal disease, ESRD, Renal failure

Healthy kidneys clean your blood by removing excess fluid, minerals, and wastes. They also make hormones that keep your bones strong and your blood healthy. But if the kidneys are damaged, they don't work properly. Harmful wastes can build up in your body. Your blood pressure may rise. Your body may retain excess fluid and not make enough red blood cells. This is called kidney failure.

If your kidneys fail, you need treatment to replace the work they normally do. The treatment options are dialysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/dialysis.html>] or a kidney transplant [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneytransplantation.html>]. Each treatment has benefits and drawbacks. No matter which treatment you choose, you'll need to make some changes in your life, including how you eat and plan your activities. But with the help of health care providers, family, and friends, most people with kidney failure can lead full and active lives.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- Kidney Failure (ESRD) Symptoms, Causes and Treatment [<https://www.kidneyfund.org/all-about-kidneys/kidney-failure-symptoms-and-causes>] (American Kidney Fund)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.kidneyfund.org/es/todo-sobre-los-rinones/la-falla-renal-o-enfermedad-renal-terminal-ert>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Creatinine Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/creatinine-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-creatinina/>]
- Kidney Failure [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/kidneyfailure>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/kidneyfailure>]
- Kidney Tests: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneytests.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/kidneytests.html>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Choosing a Treatment for Kidney Failure [https://www.kidney.org/sites/default/files/11-10-0352_choosing_treatment_kidney_failure.pdf] (National Kidney Foundation) - **PDF**
- Choosing a Treatment for Kidney Failure [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/kidney-failure/choosing-treatment>]  **Easy-to-Read** (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- Dialysis: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/dialysis.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/dialysis.html>]
- Kidney Transplantation: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneytransplantation.html>] 
(National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/kidneytransplantation.html>]

Living With

- **New!** Coping Effectively: A Guide for Patients and their Families [<https://www.kidney.org/kidney-topics/coping-effectively-guide-patients-and-their-families>]
- Kidney Failure [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/kidney-failure>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- **New!** My Kidney Life Toolkit [<https://lifeoptions.org/kidney-life/>] (Life Options Rehabilitation Program)
- Renal Diet for Vegetarians: What about Protein? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-kidney-disease/expert-answers/renal-diet/faq-20058205?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/chronic-kidney-disease/expert-answers/renal-diet/faq-20058205?p=1>]
- **New!** What is Hospice for Kidney Failure? [<https://www.kidney.org/news-stories/what-hospice-kidney-failure>]
- **New!** When You Can't Do It All--Living with End-Stage Kidney Disease [<https://www.kidney.org/news-stories/when-you-can-t-do-it-all-living-end-stage-kidney-disease>] (National Kidney Foundation)

Related Issues

- Amyloidosis and Kidney Disease [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/amyloidosis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- Anemia in Chronic Kidney Disease [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/anemia>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-rinones/anemia>]
- Keeping Kidneys Safe: Smart Choices about Medicines [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/keeping-kidneys-safe>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- Mineral and Bone Disorder in Chronic Kidney Disease [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/mineral-bone-disorder>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-rinones/alteracion-metabolismo-mineral-oseo>]
- MRI: Is Gadolinium Safe for People with Kidney Problems? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-kidney-disease/expert-answers/gadolinium/faq-20057772?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/chronic-kidney-disease/expert-answers/gadolinium/faq-20057772?p=1>]
- Vaccines for Adults with Advanced Chronic Kidney Disease, Kidney Failure, or Kidney Transplant [<https://www.kidney.org/kidney-topics/vaccines-adults-advanced-chronic-kidney-disease-kidney-failure-or-kidney-transplant>] (National Kidney Foundation)

Specifics

- Acute Kidney Injury [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/kidney-failure/symptoms-causes/syc-20369048?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Genetics

- Alport syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/alport-syndrome/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Autosomal dominant tubulointerstitial kidney disease--UMOD: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/autosomal-dominant-tubulointerstitial-kidney-disease-umod/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Fibronectin glomerulopathy: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/fibronectin-glomerulopathy/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Nephronophthisis: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/nephronophthisis/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Health Check Tools

- **New!** Are You at Risk of Developing Kidney Disease?: One-Minute Quiz [<https://www.kidney.org/kidney-quiz/>] (National Kidney Foundation)

Statistics and Research

- Kidney Disease Statistics for the United States [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Kidney Failure [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Kidney+Failure%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Kidney Failure, Chronic [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Kidney+Failure,+Chronic%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Improved survival with high albumin leakage in patients with protein-energy wasting... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40751051>]
- Article: Bringing the museum into the hospital to promote cultural wellness in... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40750800>]
- Article: Epidemiology and economic burden of end-stage kidney disease by age, gender,... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40739546>]
- Kidney Failure -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Kidney+Failure%2C+Chronic%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Kidneys and Urinary Tract (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/kidneys-urinary.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/kidneys-urinary.html>]
- Your Kidneys and How They Work [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/kidneys-how-they-work>] 
(National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-rinones/rinones-funcionamiento>]

Find an Expert

- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 
- National Kidney Foundation [<https://www.kidney.org/>]

Children

- How Do Health Care Professionals Treat Kidney Failure in Children? [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/children#kidney>] 
(National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-rinones/ninos#cuidado-kd>]
- **New!** Vaccines for Children with Advanced Chronic Kidney Disease, Kidney Failure, or Kidney Transplant [<https://www.kidney.org/kidney-topics/vaccines-children-advanced-chronic-kidney-disease-kidney-failure-or-kidney-transplant>] (National Kidney Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- Acute kidney failure [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000501.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000501.htm>]
- Acute tubular necrosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000512.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000512.htm>]
- Dialysis - peritoneal [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007434.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007434.htm>]
- End-stage kidney disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000500.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000500.htm>]
- Glomerular filtration rate [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007305.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007305.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Acute kidney failure \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000501.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000501.htm)

[Acute tubular necrosis \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000512.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000512.htm)

[Calcium - urine \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003603.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003603.htm)

[Dialysis - peritoneal \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007434.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007434.htm)

[End-stage kidney disease \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000500.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000500.htm)

[Glomerular filtration rate \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007305.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007305.htm)

[Hepatorenal syndrome \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000489.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000489.htm)

[Lactic acidosis \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000391.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000391.htm)

[Peritonitis - secondary \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000651.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000651.htm)

[Peritonitis - spontaneous bacterial \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000648.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000648.htm)

[Potter syndrome \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001268.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001268.htm)

[Prerenal azotemia \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000508.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000508.htm)

[Renal arteriography \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003781.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003781.htm)

[Renal scan \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003790.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003790.htm)

[Urine 24-hour volume \[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003425.htm\]](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003425.htm)

Related Health Topics

Chronic Kidney Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/chronickidneydisease.html>]

Diabetic Kidney Problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/diabetickidneyproblems.html>]

Dialysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/dialysis.html>]

Kidney Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneycancer.html>]

Kidney Cysts [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneycysts.html>]

Kidney Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneydiseases.html>]

Kidney Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneytests.html>]

Kidney Transplantation [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneytransplantation.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Kidney Failure* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/kidneyfailure.html>] on *Kidney Failure*

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