

Welcome to the Kidney Care Clinic

PATIENT INFORMATION LABEL

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):

PHN:

Dear kidney care clinic patient,

You have been referred to our kidney care clinic. We help people living with decreased kidney function. Our goal is to help you maintain the health of your kidneys as long as possible.

If you do not speak or understand English, please bring an English-speaking family member or friend to your appointments. We will provide an interpreter whenever possible.

Your first visit is expected to take 1 - 2 hours, but can sometimes take up to 3 hours.

During your visits, you will be introduced to doctors and other health professionals who will support you through your kidney journey. This may include a nurse, dietitian, social worker, clerk and, in some clinics, a pharmacist. They will provide information on several topics. This could include lifestyle suggestions (diet, exercise) and medications. They will also prepare you for changes in your kidney function if necessary.

A handout with more information on [BC's kidney care clinics](#) is included in this package.

Please bring with you:

1. Your medications or a list of medications you take. This includes non-prescription products (vitamins, supplements, herbal and traditional medicines).
2. Your BC Services Card (so we know you are the correct person).
3. ["Kidney Care and You"](#) form (included in this package). **Please fill out before your appointment.**
4. List of questions and concerns you wish to discuss.

If you have a hearing aid, please wear it to the appointment.

We suggest bringing a family member or friend to your first appointment. They can provide support as you navigate this process.

Your appointment

Date: _____ Time: _____ Type (check one): In-person Phone Video

If you need to cancel your appointment, please call the clinic as soon as possible. We are happy to reschedule. Please also inform us if your contact information changes.

Before your first appointment, please do the following:

1. Review the handout on [Chronic Kidney Disease](#) (included in this package).
2. Look into resources provided by The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC & Yukon Branch ([kidney.ca](#)). They have many resources, as well as a Kidney Wellness Hub ([kidneywellnesshub.ca](#)). They can connect you with a trained peer mentor. These volunteers understand what it's like to live with kidney disease and are willing to share their own experiences. Call 1.866.390.7337 or complete the "[Kidney Care and You](#)" form (included in this package) and email bcyprograms@kidney.ca to learn more.

To learn more about what to expect, please go to BC Renal's website at [BCRenal.ca](#) ► [Health Info](#) ► [Kidney Care \(Non-Dialysis\)](#) ► [New to Kidney Care Clinic](#).

Clinic information

We look forward to working with you!

Your Kidney Care Clinic Team

1

Why have I been referred to a kidney care clinic?

People with reduced kidney function are referred to a kidney care clinic. The clinic's team of doctors and other health professionals can help you maintain your kidney health. They will support you through your kidney journey and, if necessary, prepare you for changes in your kidney function, including in some cases a kidney transplant or dialysis.



Some patients come to our clinic for a few months but most come for much longer (i.e., several months or years). Treatment options vary based on each person's needs.

2

How does a visit to a kidney care clinic differ from a visit to my kidney doctor's office?



The biggest difference between a kidney care clinic and a kidney doctor's office is the number of health professionals available. As a patient, you'll have a team helping you. This includes a nurse, dietitian, social worker, clerk and, in some clinics, a pharmacist, in addition to your kidney doctor. The team will work closely with your kidney doctor during your time at the clinic.

Each member of the team has a different focus (explained further in question 3). Together, they will help you and your family manage your kidney disease. The number of providers you see at each visit will depend on your needs at the time.

3

What does each clinic team member do?

Nephrologist (Kidney Doctor)

Your nephrologist will assess your health and make suggestions to help you manage your kidney disease (and other related illnesses).

Nurse

The nurse will provide you with information about your kidneys and treatment. You may receive telephone calls from the nurse in between appointments to check in on you and your health and discuss lab results and blood pressure readings.



Dietitian

The dietitian will assist you in planning and maintaining a kidney-friendly diet. Your culture, lifestyle, preferred foods, and current kidney function will be considered before making suggestions. You will learn about the different foods that are best for your kidneys.

Social Worker

The social worker will help you with emotional and practical concerns related to your health. They can provide you with mental health resources and connect you to peer support.

Pharmacist (where available)

The pharmacist will help you manage your medications and may suggest changes throughout your kidney journey. They will review both prescription and non-prescription medications (e.g., vitamins, supplements, herbal and traditional medicines) to assess what's best for your kidneys.

Clerk

The clerk will arrange and schedule your appointments at the kidney care clinic.

4

What do I need to know about my clinic appointments?



It is very important that you attend all scheduled appointments at the kidney care clinic. This gives you the best chance of maintaining kidney function and staying on top of your overall health. Missing appointments can mean missed information and assessments.

If you cannot make an appointment, please let the clinic know as soon as possible. We are happy to reschedule. If your contact information changes, please let us know as well.

Appointments can take place either in-person or by phone or video, depending on your needs and preferences. Typically, there will be a bit of both.

Your first appointment will likely take 1-2 hours, but can sometimes take up to 3 hours. As you'll often be seeing multiple providers, future visits usually take 30-90 minutes.

If you do not speak or understand English, please bring an English-speaking family member or friend. We will provide an interpreter whenever possible.

5

What should I bring or have ready for each clinic appointment?

- Your medications or a list of medications you take, including non-prescription products (vitamins, supplements, herbal, and traditional medicines)
- Your BC Services Card
- A blood pressure record (if you record your blood pressure)
- A blood sugar record (if you have diabetes)
- A list of questions and concerns you wish to discuss with the team



If you have a hearing aid, please wear it to the appointment.

You are welcome to bring a family member or friend with you to your appointments. In fact, we encourage it!

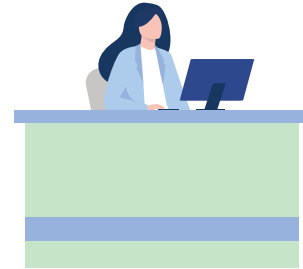
6

What happens after each clinic appointment?

After your appointment, you will receive your next appointment date (mailed or e-mailed to you, or provided by the clerk). You may also receive a new lab requisition and prescription (faxed to your pharmacy).

If your kidney doctor suggests further tests, we will contact you. Your kidney doctor will keep your primary care provider and specialist(s) up to date. Your team at the kidney clinic is also available if there are changes related to your kidneys that occur in between clinic visits.

We look forward to working with you and supporting your kidney health!



Kidney Care and You

Please fill out this form and bring to your first appointment. Your answers will help us to tailor our support to your individual needs.

PATIENT INFORMATION LABEL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

PHN: _____



QUESTIONNAIRE

1

Before you received this package, had you ever been told that you have a problem with your kidneys?

Yes No I'm not sure

2

What have you been told about your kidney problem?

3

Right now, I am most concerned with?

4

Other concerns I have are

5

Let us know of anything else you would like to share to help us get to know you better.

Chronic Kidney Disease



Chronic Kidney Disease

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a term used to describe a number of conditions that damage kidneys or cause reduced kidney function for three months or more.

Kidney disease can range from mild to severe. Sometimes people can develop kidney failure. Kidney failure is also called *end-stage kidney disease* (ESKD). Kidney disease often starts slowly and develops without symptoms over several years. You may not even know you have CKD until your kidney function is quite low. Fortunately, most people do not progress to end-stage kidney disease. If kidney disease is found early, you can take steps to look after your remaining kidney function.

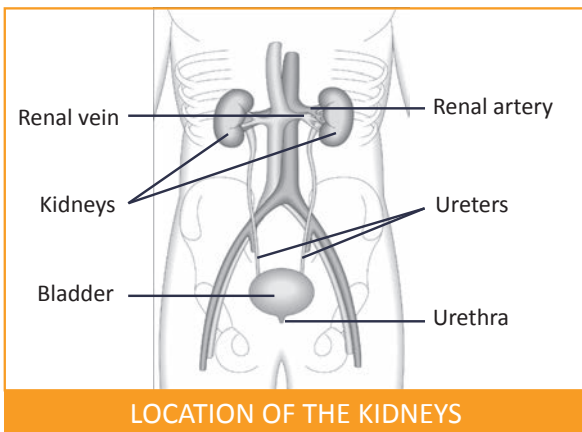
“End-stage” kidney disease does not mean the end of your life. End-stage means the end of your kidney function: your kidneys can no longer filter your blood. If your kidneys fail, there are a number of treatment options available. These include different forms of dialysis, transplantation and conservative kidney management (non-dialysis supportive care).

For more information on treatment options, contact your local Kidney Foundation office to request our patient handbook *Book Two: Living with Kidney Failure*.

Model(s) are a depiction of people with kidney disease.

What Do the Kidneys Do?

Kidneys are as important to your health as your heart or your lungs. Kidneys remove waste products from your body, regulate water and produce hormones. Normally people have two kidneys, one on either side of your back below your rib cage. Each kidney is reddish brown in colour, shaped like a kidney bean, and about the size of your fist.



Healthy kidneys filter waste products from your blood and return cleaned blood back to your body. They regulate the levels of water, salts, acids and different minerals your body needs for good health. They produce hormones that control other body functions, including blood pressure. Many of your other organs depend on your kidneys to work properly.

The Causes of CKD

There are many different kidney diseases and disorders. Some people are born with kidney disease and others develop it as they grow older. Often, kidney disease is associated with other medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Most diseases of the kidney attack the filtering units in the kidney. This damages their ability to remove waste and excess fluids. There is no cure for CKD, but it may be possible to prevent it or slow it down. This is especially true in cases of people with diabetes and/or high blood pressure – the leading causes of kidney failure.

The main causes of kidney disease are:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Glomerulonephritis (specific diseases causing kidney inflammation)
- Polycystic kidney disease (a genetic condition)
- Urinary tract obstruction (blockage of urine from the kidneys)
- Recurrent kidney stones (multiple kidney stones can cause scarring of the kidneys and could reduce kidney function)
- Drug- and medication-induced kidney problems (illegal drugs and some over-the-counter and prescription medications can damage the kidneys)

The Five Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease

There are five stages of CKD. Each stage relates to the level of kidney function and kidney damage. This table helps you understand CKD at each stage.

CKD STAGE	KIDNEY FUNCTION	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT OPTIONS
NORMAL	≥ 60%*	No symptoms observed	Identify source of kidney damage (ie: kidney ultrasound to look for kidney cysts) Monitor urine albumin-creatinine ratio and Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)
MILD	45%- 59%	No symptoms observed	Monitor urine albumin-creatinine ratio and GFR, blood pressure, general health and well-being Try to stop or slow down the worsening of kidney function
MODERATE	30%- 44%	Early symptoms may occur and could include tiredness, poor appetite, and itching	Monitor urine albumin-creatinine ratio and GFR, and continue to try to stop or slow the worsening of kidney function Learn more about CKD and treatment options
SEVERE	15%- 29%	Tiredness, poor appetite and itching may get worse	Monitor urine albumin-creatinine ratio and GFR, and continue to try to stop or slow the worsening of kidney function Discuss and plan for treatment choice: dialysis access, assessment for transplant, or information about conservative kidney management
KIDNEY FAILURE	< 15%	Symptoms may include severe fatigue, nausea, difficulty breathing and itchiness	Monitor urine albumin-creatinine ratio and GFR, and continue to try to stop or slow the worsening of kidney function Continue with conservative kidney management, plan for transplant or start dialysis (depending on symptoms) **

* Normal unless there is an underlying issue, kidney damage or albumin in the urine.

** The timing of starting dialysis treatment depends on a large number of factors. This should be discussed with your doctors and healthcare team.

People from Indigenous, African/Caribbean, Asian, South Asian, Hispanic or Pacific Island backgrounds are at higher risk of developing kidney failure. They have more kidney disease risk factors and they experience a faster rate of kidney function decline at a younger age. Indigenous people (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) in Canada are over three times as likely to have their kidneys fail as non-Indigenous people.

Symptoms of CKD

Some of the signs and symptoms of reduced kidney function include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Puffiness of the eyes, hands and feet
- Bloody, cloudy or tea-coloured urine
- Excessive foaming of the urine which can indicate protein in the urine
- Frequent passing of urine during the night
- Passing less urine or difficulty passing urine
- Fatigue, difficulty concentrating
- Loss of appetite or weight
- Persistent generalized itching

Checking Your Kidney Function

You can ask your doctor to check your kidney function. There are two key tests that are used to detect kidney damage and to see how well your kidneys are working.

Blood test

A creatinine test, a blood test which measures the level of wastes in your blood, is used to work out your estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR or just GFR). Your GFR shows how well your kidneys are working to remove wastes from your body. It is the most common way to measure kidney function. The GFR number roughly represents the percentage of kidney function remaining.

Urinalysis

A simple urine test is used to look for blood and protein in your urine. Having protein in the urine is usually a sign of kidney disease.

Other blood tests, X-rays, ultrasound or a kidney biopsy may also be needed to diagnose the specific type of kidney disease and to decide the best treatment for you.

Preventing the Progress of Kidney Disease



Most people's kidney function changes slowly and not everyone with chronic kidney disease will develop end-stage kidney disease. In most cases, looking after your kidney health and protecting your remaining kidney function depends on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and managing other medical conditions you may have.

Some ways to help prevent or minimize the progression of kidney disease are:

- Control high blood pressure (ask your healthcare team what your blood pressure goal is)
- Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes (ask your healthcare team what your blood sugar goals are)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don't smoke
- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy diet
- Take medications as prescribed

For more information about managing reduced kidney function, contact your local Kidney Foundation office to receive a copy of our patient handbook *Book One: Living with Reduced Kidney Function*.

OUR VISION

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is committed to achieving excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life, and a cure for kidney disease.

OUR MISSION

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease through:

- Funding and stimulating innovative research for better treatments and a cure;
- Providing education and support to prevent kidney disease in those at risk and empower those with kidney disease to optimize their health status;
- Advocating for improved access to high quality healthcare;
- Increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

For further information, or to help us in our efforts, please contact The Kidney Foundation office in your area. You can also visit our website at kidney.ca.

The Kidney Foundation would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Kidney Foundation's National Programs & Public Policy committee for their contributions and professional expertise in the development of this resource.

This material is available in accessible formats upon request by contacting info@kidney.ca or calling 1-800-361-7494.

What you eat is an important part of managing your kidney disease. Eating a healthy, balanced diet can help slow the progression of kidney disease. Your diet can also help to manage kidney related conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, gout, and high cholesterol.

Information found online may not be right for you. Speak with a dietitian on your kidney care team for recommendations that are specific to you.



Source: Canada's Food Guide

The Basics of Healthy Eating

- Use your plate as a guide:
- Half vegetables and fruit
 - One quarter whole grains
 - One quarter protein



Fresh Foods: Eat mostly unprocessed foods. Cook from scratch using fresh or frozen whole ingredients.



Vegetables and Fruit: Include vegetables and fruit at every meal and snack.



Whole Grains: Choose whole grains such as whole grain breads, barley, oats, brown and wild rice.



Protein: Choose a variety of proteins from plant and animal-based sources. Choose plant-based proteins such as tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and nut butters more often. Speak with a dietitian to discuss your protein needs.



Fluids: Drink mostly water to keep hydrated. Enjoy it plain or add lemon, cucumber, cut up fruit, or a squirt of flavour drops.



Sodium: Choose foods that have less than 10-15% sodium per serving. Fresh foods and foods labeled “No Salt Added” or “Low Sodium” are good choices.



Sugar: Choose fruit more often when you want to eat something sweet. Limit high sugar foods and drinks such as juice, pop, iced tea, candy, and baked goods.



Potassium and Phosphorus: Potassium and phosphorus additives are often in processed foods and should be avoided if you've been told your potassium or phosphorus level is high. Cutting out fresh or whole foods is not necessary. Speak to your dietitian on your kidney care team for recommendations that are specific to you.

Example meal plan

Breakfast: Oatmeal, blueberries, yogurt topped with seeds

Lunch: Salad with mixed greens, cucumber, orange slices, wild rice and chickpeas drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar

Snack: Apple slices with nut or seed butter

Dinner: Salmon (fresh or canned) with broccoli, cherry tomatoes and whole wheat pasta tossed with olive oil, a sprinkle of parmesan cheese, fresh or dried herbs (eg. oregano, thyme) and black pepper



Need more ideas? Contact your Dietitian and check out these websites:

- [BC Renal, Diet](https://www.bcrenal.ca/diet) tinyurl.com/498x9hjz
 - [Mediterranean Diet and Kidney Disease](https://www.bcrenal.ca/mediterranean-diet) tinyurl.com/bdd733tn
 - [Recipes and cooking videos](https://www.bcrenal.ca/recipes) (scroll to the bottom of the page, under the heading "Recipes and Cooking Videos") tinyurl.com/498x9hjz
- [Kidney Community Kitchen](https://www.bcrenal.ca/kitchen) tinyurl.com/nsd344r2
- [Kidney Wellness Hub, Eating Well](https://www.bcrenal.ca/wellness) (cooking classes, interactive Q&A with dietitians) tinyurl.com/jvfwwmbp
- [Spice it Up!](https://www.bcrenal.ca/spice-it-up) (recipes) tinyurl.com/4423x2e6

If you have early stages of kidney disease and do not have access to a dietitian who works in kidney care, you can call 811 and speak to a HealthLink dietitian (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) for general nutrition advice.

[Healthlinkbc.ca/more/contact-us/8-1-1](https://healthlinkbc.ca/more/contact-us/8-1-1)

How to Read Nutrition Labels

The Nutrition Facts table gives you a lot of information about the foods you eat. Use the label and ingredient list to compare products and help you make healthy food choices.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 100 g (3 slices)	
Calories 90	% Daily Value*
Fat 2.5 g	
Saturated 1 g	3 %
+ Trans 0 g	5 %
Carbohydrate 2.5 g	
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 14 g	
Cholesterol 25 mg	
Sodium 850 mg	37%
Potassium 550 mg	12%
Calcium 20 mg	2%
Iron 0.75 mg	4%

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

Step 1: Look at the serving size. Compare this to how much you eat. Eating more or less than this serving means you are getting more or less of the nutrients as well.

Step 2: Read the % Daily Value. This is a quick way to tell if the food contains a little (5% or less) or a lot (15% or more) of a nutrient.

Daily Value Meter, Source: Health Canada

Ingredients: Pork • Water • Sugars (sugar, glucose, solids, detrose) • Potassium lactate • Salt • Flavours • Sodium phosphate • Sodium diacetate • Sodium erythorbate • Sodium nitrite • Smoke flavour • Smoke. Coated with collagen.

Step 3: Check the ingredient list for additives. If you have been told your potassium or phosphorus level is high, avoid foods that have ingredients that include the words “**potassium**” or “**phos**” in them (e.g. potassium lactate, phosphoric acid, tricalcium phosphate). These are often found in processed foods. Your dietitian can review this with you.

Manufacturers can change ingredients in their products at any time so it is important to check labels and ingredient lists often.