

Families and Kidney Disease

*If you're on dialysis,
your family is at risk for
kidney disease, too.*

Family members of dialysis patients are the highest risk group for chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Why? Kidney disease runs in families.

The two leading causes, diabetes and high blood pressure, also run in families. Certain ethnic groups also have a higher risk: African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans. One in nine adult Americans has CKD; most don't know it.

People with kidney disease often feel fine in the early stages. CKD can be a silent disease with no noticeable symptoms. The only way to tell if a person is at risk is by screening tests.

Family members of dialysis patients should talk to their doctors about CKD risk and ask about simple screening tests:

- Blood pressure check
- Test for protein in the urine
- Blood test for creatinine (a waste product removed by the kidneys) used to determine eGFR, a measure of how well the kidneys are working



Kidney disease can be prevented. And if it's caught early, it can be treated so that it may not lead to kidney failure and dialysis. Here's how:

- Get tested for CKD
- Control high blood pressure
- Control diabetes
- Stop smoking
- Reduce salt in your diet
- Lose weight if you need to
- Healthy diet
- Regular exercise
- Limit alcohol
- Avoid overuse of over-the-counter pain relievers such as Advil, Aleve, naproxen, ibuprofen
- Have regular checkups

Kidney disease and heart disease are strongly linked, so everything that helps your kidneys also helps your heart.

Talk to your family about CKD risk. Encourage them to discuss the risk with their health care providers.