

- correct dehydration.
- Diseases in the kidneys or elsewhere in the body may need specific treatment.

Occasionally kidneys continue to get damaged despite the treatments discussed above. If your kidneys do not respond you may need to have other treatment to help you, and if this is needed, your doctors will discuss this with you.

*If you have diabetes or heart disease, your treatments may need to be balanced so that your kidney health and treatment for these conditions can both be supported.*

### Will my kidneys get better?

With early treatment, most people with AKI recover completely. A small number of people will either have on-going problems with their kidneys, or their kidney function improves but doesn't return to normal.

### What to expect after I go home:

Everyone recovers differently, you may be tired and need to rest more, listen and give yourself time to recover.

In most cases, your GP will monitor the kidneys and your recovery. Some people will need to attend a kidney clinic.

Keep well hydrated. Water is the best choice, two litres (approx 3.5 pints) a day is recommended, unless you have been instructed to limit your fluid intake. If you are passing more urine than normal and it is very pale, you may be drinking more than you need.

Avoid alcoholic drinks. Tea and coffee are safe to drink in moderation.

If you become unwell and are passing less urine than normal or if you have diarrhoea and vomiting and cannot drink normally, then seek advice from your GP or NHS 111.

Smoking is harmful it slows blood flow to important organs like the kidneys. Your Doctor or Pharmacist can support you to give up smoking.

Information from 'Think Kidneys' and 'Kidney Patients UK' websites April 2018.



## What is Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)?

Acute Kidney Injury or AKI describes damage to the kidneys, usually due to an unrelated underlying illness, which can stop your kidneys from working as well as they should.

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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## What is Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)?

Your kidneys are a bean-shaped organ about 10cm in length. Most people have two and they are found at the back of your body just under the ribcage. Each kidney holds around 5 miles of tubing designed to filter your blood.

### What do the kidneys normally do?

- They **remove waste products** and toxins from the body by making urine.
- They **control fluid balance**, making sure we do not have too much water (overload) or too little water (dehydration) in our system.
- They **regulate blood pressure**, keeping it at just the right level.
- Kidneys also make vitamin D which helps to keep our bones strong, and help your body to make red blood cells.

### Who can get an AKI?

Anyone can develop AKI; however, there are some groups of people that are at greater risk, for example:

- People over 65 years of age
- People with diabetes, liver disease, high blood pressure or heart disease
- If you are having major surgery
- If you had kidney disease previously
- If you are taking certain medications including drugs used to treat blood pressure or excess body fluid, pain

medication such as Ibuprofen, and some antibiotics.

**It is important to know which of your regular medications may have an impact on your kidney function.**

**Your Doctor or Pharmacist will be able to discuss this with you**

### How is Acute Kidney Injury diagnosed?

Either your blood tests will have shown an increase in the level of a substance called creatinine, or the amount of urine that you produce has reduced.

You might not have any symptoms. Some people experience the following (which can also be caused by other health conditions and not necessarily due to kidney disease):

- feeling sick (nausea)
- feeling generally unwell
- passing less urine than normal

### What causes Acute Kidney injury?

There are a number of causes of AKI. These can include:

- Serious infection and/or sepsis.
- Dehydration from loss of body fluid.

Just ASK\*

\*Acute Sepsis and Kidney injury Team

- Low blood pressure which might result from a number of different causes such as dehydration.
- Blockage of the tubes which drain urine from the kidneys.
- An unexpected side effect of certain medications.
- Due to diseases in the kidneys or elsewhere in the body affecting kidney function.

### Assessment and Treatment for Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)

Essentially, the cause of the AKI will need to be identified and treated to enable your kidneys to recover. Should you choose to have treatment, the following options are available:

- An ultrasound scan may be needed to look at the flow of urine through your kidneys to check for blockages.
- A urinary catheter may be used to relieve a blockage or to measure your urine output. A sample of your urine will be checked.
- Your medications will be reviewed and we may stop or reduce some of them until your kidneys are working better.
- Common causes like infection and dehydration will need to be treated, you may need intravenous (IV) fluids to