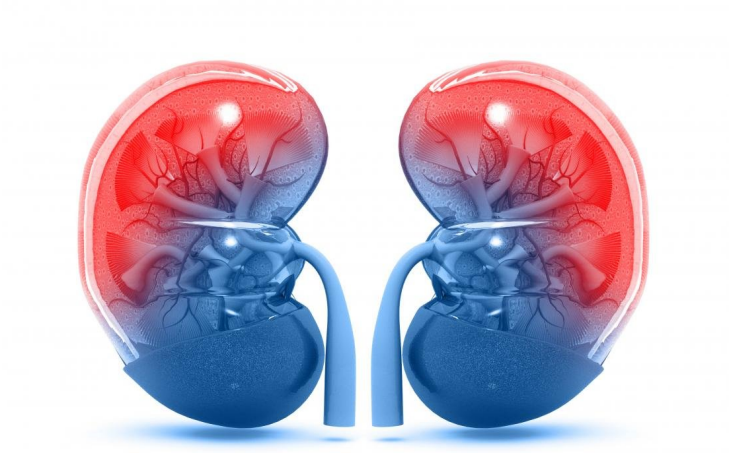
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How to take best care of your kidneys?

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The most important job of the kidneys is to clean the blood and remove excess fluid and other toxic substances, the accumulation of which can be dangerous for the body.



Kidneys, the bean-shaped organs, located at the back of the abdominal cavity, are extremely vital to health. Kidneys are responsible for a number of important functions in the human body. The most important job of the kidneys is to clean the blood and remove excess fluid and other toxic substances, the accumulation of which can be dangerous for the body. The kidneys also play a very important role in the production of RBCs which are an important part of our blood. They also help in regulating the blood pressure and bone health. It is therefore very important that we tackle good care of our kidneys and continue to get the benefit of the multiple roles our kidneys play.

Several measures can be taken to avoid it, and keep the kidneys safe. Here are some of them:

Avoid taking over-the-counter drugs:

Such medications pose a threat if consumed on a regular basis. If you are suffering from chronic pain, it is best to consult a doctor and figure out other ways to abate the pain, instead of resorting to over-the-counter pills.

Quit smoking, & consumption of drugs/alcohol:

Blood flow to the kidneys slows down due to smoking. If less blood reaches the kidneys, it reduces their ability to function properly. Not only does it cause kidney problems, but it also increases the chances of kidney cancer by about 50%.

Exercise:

Regular work-out sessions help in keeping the body fit and healthy. Staying fit has a positive impact on not only the kidneys, but also on the rest of the body and mind. Exercising and keeping a check on eating habits helps in controlling body-weight and ensures the smooth functioning of kidneys.

Monitor blood sugar level:

Most people suffering from diabetes run a higher risk of having renal disorders. The damage diabetes does to kidneys can be mitigated, if detected in its early stages. Therefore, it is essential for diabetes patients to go for regular screenings to ensure good health of the kidneys.

Keep a close tab on blood pressure levels:

High blood pressure can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and give rise to a lot of other health issues. It is also one of the most common causes of kidney failure. The normal blood pressure level is 120/80. If it goes above 140/90, one must check with a doctor immediately to prevent the risk of kidney damage.

Get your kidney function checked if you are at risk:

If you are a diabetic, hypertensive or have a family member with kidney disease, you are at risk of developing kidney disease. Remember, if detected early enough, kidney disease can be treated. So, get your kidney function tested at least annually. This can be done by a a very simple blood test.

Dietary Aspects:

Eating wholesome food and keeping the body-weight in check, helps prevent several heart diseases, diabetes and conditions associated with CKD.

- **Reduce salt intake** – Regardless of kidney disease, people should always monitor their salt intake. Although, the advisable sodium intake is 5-6 grams per day (around a teaspoon of salt), those undergoing dialysis treatment are asked to avoid any food which contains over 250 mg of salt.

- **Drink lots, but not excess water** – Researches have not yet been able to set down a yardstick for water consumption, on a daily basis, to maintain good health. According to research conducted in *Canada* and *Australia*, drinking sufficient amount of water helps kidneys drain out sodium, urea & toxins from the body, which, in turn lowers the chances of developing CKD. Although, the study does not encourage 'aggressive fluid loading', an ideal amount of 1.5-2 litres per day – depending upon gender, climate, and other external factors – is recommended.

- **Eat sufficient protein** – Protein is essential for the growth & repair of muscles. Include high protein food items in your diet – such as pulses, meat, poultry, fish, egg whites, yogurt, milk, and cheese.

- **Take just enough calories** – A calorie is a unit of energy – so it is extremely vital to consider its intake while concocting a diet chart. The amount of calories that need to be taken, depend entirely on gender, physical fitness, weight, and health conditions. In order to lose a few pounds, an over-weight person might have to cut down their calorie intake – which in turn, will help improve the blood pressure & blood sugar level.

As you might see, preventing kidney disease is not rocket-science. It is more common sense. By following some simple rules and living a healthy life, you can ensure that your kidneys serve you for several long years. You owe yourself this much, don't you?

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