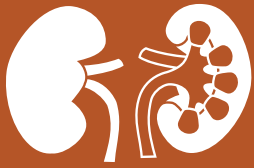


IF YOUR KIDNEYS FAIL





If your kidneys fail

NOTES:

In the early stages of chronic kidney disease, lifestyle changes (such as getting more exercise, stopping smoking and cutting down on sodium), managing other medical conditions and taking a few medications may be all the treatment needed to slow the damage to the kidneys. People often go for many years, or all of their life, without needing other forms of treatment. The kidneys are so good at doing their job that even diseased kidneys can keep you healthy for a long time. Damage to the kidneys may be slowed down or even stopped if you take steps to preserve your kidney function.

If your kidney function does continue to decline, you may start developing symptoms of kidney disease. Each person is different, but most people will start to develop symptoms when their kidney disease becomes severe. At that time you will need to discuss additional treatment options with your healthcare team.

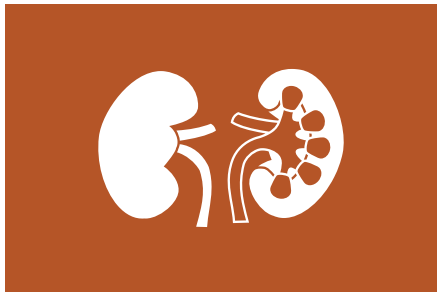
Uremia

Uremia is a Greek word that means “urine in the blood”. Uremia develops as the kidneys fail and are unable to remove wastes from the body. There are many symptoms of uremia that occur as kidney function declines.

Signs and symptoms that may occur with uremia

- Weight loss
- Weakness
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Shortness of breath
- Leg cramps
- Itching
- Chest pain
- Easy bruising
- Swelling in ankles and legs
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Bad taste in the mouth
- Restless legs
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Cold intolerance
- Skin colour changes
- Decreased sexual desire

If your kidneys fail



Before severe uremia develops, treatments such as dialysis and transplantation are usually needed. The timing of dialysis will depend on your symptoms and varies from person to person.

There is a lot to learn and a lot to understand when you are living with kidney disease. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the information you need to take control of your healthcare in the early stages of kidney disease.

If your kidneys fail, there are a number of different treatment options including non-dialysis supportive care (conservative care), transplantation, or different forms of dialysis. More information about treatment for kidney failure is included in **Book Two - Living with kidney failure**. You can also contact The Kidney Foundation of Canada office in your area and consult the web site at www.kidney.ca.

NOTES:
