

Kirklin Clinic Kidney Talk

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Proteinuria

An important part of taking care of yourself is knowing what is going on in your body.

When you come to clinic, we talk about what your blood work tells us about your kidneys. We also talk about what we see when we analyze your urine under a microscope.

But sometimes it seems like we talk a foreign language.

Just why do we analyze the urine in the lab and what do we see?

The urine can tell us many things. It can tell us if you have an infection, but it can also tell us if you are leaking protein or blood in the urine. Proteins are often called the body's building blocks. But when protein is found in large numbers in your urine, it can mean damage to your kidneys.

Sometimes people have protein in their urine and it goes away. This is called transient because it does not last. Often this happens after hard exercise or a fever.

People with kidney disease, and especially diabetics with kidney disease, sometimes have protein that does not go away. This is because their kidneys are damaged and not working well.

The kidneys strain the blood to remove wastes and extra water your body does not need. When they are damaged, the "strainers" sometimes let the protein out into the urine.

People who have protein in the urine have proteinuria (protein + urine). Usually they do not know. They don't feel bad and their urine doesn't look different.

There is some evidence that protein in the urine can damage the kidneys more.

We have some medicines which help with proteinuria. These are often the same medicines that help lower your blood pressure. Eating a low salt diet can also decrease the amount of protein you spill in the urine.

Ask your provider if you have protein in your urine.

There are a lot of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs for stomach problems. Just because you do not need a prescription does not mean they are safe. Some drugs may contain minerals that your kidneys cannot get rid of. These minerals include magnesium, aluminum, and phosphorus. Some drugs have calcium and you may already be taking medicines for your kidney disease that either have calcium or increase the calcium levels in your blood. So, it is important not to take other drugs that have calcium. You may also be taking a medicine for your kidney disease that controls the amount of acid in your blood. Some stomach medicines can affect the amount of acid in your blood too. It is important not to take these together. Also, the kidneys get rid of some drugs. When you have kidney disease, these drugs may build up and cause too many side effects. The chart below may help you in choosing an OTC stomach medicine. Before taking any OTC drugs, make sure to ask your pharmacist or health care provider if it is safe for your kidney disease.

OTC Drugs to Avoid in Kidney Disease	
Drug	Reason kidney patients should not take
Constipation/Laxatives	
Milk of Magnesia <i>Example - Phillips® Milk of Magnesia</i>	Too much Magnesium
Enemas <i>Example - Fleet® Enema</i>	Too much Phosphorus or Magnesium
Magnesium citrate <i>Example - Slow-Mag</i>	Too much Magnesium
Heartburn/Reflux	
Antacids <i>Examples - Maalox®, Rolaids®, Gaviscon®</i>	Too much Aluminum, Magnesium, and/or Calcium
Zegrid®(omeprazole/sodium bicarbonate)	Affects the amount of acid in your blood
General Stomach Upset	
Alka-Seltzer®	Affects the amount of acid in your blood
Bismuth subsalicylate <i>Examples - Pepto-Bismol®, Kaopectate</i>	Kidney cannot get rid of drug and will cause too many side effects

Kidney Peers

Ever wish you could talk to someone who really understood what you are going through?
Ever want to know what it is like to live with kidney disease but didn't know who to ask?
If you have a telephone, we have an answer.

Kidney Peers

Kidney Peers is a national program which matches someone who wants to help with someone who wants help. Mentors are not professionals. They are everyday people who have experience with kidney disease, dialysis, transplant and often all three. They learn how to help other patients who have kidney disease.

Privacy is important and kidney peers call into a special number. The person you talk to does not know your home number.

If you are interested, call 1-855-653-7337 or e-mail nkfpairs@kidney.org.



Patient Story



I was diagnosed with end stage kidney disease in April, 2005 and had my first dialysis in May, 2005. I had no idea anything was wrong with me so finding out I had kidney disease and needed dialysis was a shock. The first thing I felt was fear. I didn't know what to expect. Fortunately, some patients took me under their wing and supported me. It was not easy but I began to adjust to dialysis and learn what I needed to do.

A year after beginning dialysis, my son gave me his kidney. At first I felt very guilty and anxious but he had no second thoughts. He told me I was his mom and he would do anything for me. The kidney only lasted 14 months and I am back on dialysis.

My second time around, I vowed to be active in my own care. I am sticking to my food plan, controlling my fluid, learning my medicines. Most of all, I listen to my body.

Now, I try to give back. I want to guide others on their journey through kidney disease.

For me, family support is key. My husband is my partner. He helps me with meals and managing my medicines. He goes with me to my clinic visits and helps me take care of myself.

I can look back over the past seven years through the eyes of faith, not fear. I see that God uses bad situations to help us find strength. And I see we need to pass our strength to others. I have always had faith in God but kidney disease has made that faith blossom. I have been tested and in the darkest moments I know I will see light. Fear does not conquer me because I know I have God's love. As the song goes, "God of the good times is still God in the bad times."

These are my seven commandments for living with kidney disease:

1. Learn your body and what affects you. Listen to what it says.
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
3. Learn all you can about kidney disease. Fear of the unknown is your enemy.
4. Do something you enjoy during treatment.
5. After treatment, go home; eat a good meal; rest.
6. Know you can always depend on the dialysis staff to help you
7. Trust God; he will take care of you

SR, hemodialysis patient