

KIDNEY INFECTION, CHRONIC

(Pyelonephritis, Chronic)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Infection and inflammation of the kidneys that develops slowly and lasts for months or years. It leads to scarring and eventual loss of kidney function. Kidneys filter waste material from the blood and produce urine. This disorder can affect adults of both sexes, but it is more common in women.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Usually there are no signs or symptoms, unlike acute kidney infection. The following symptoms occur if chronic kidney failure develops:

- Anemia (paleness and fatigue).
- Weakness.
- Loss of appetite, nausea.
- High blood pressure and buildup of fluid in the body.
- Pain in one or both sides of the lower back.
- Blood in the urine.
- Numbness and tingling of the hands and feet.

CAUSES

The kidneys have been scarred or damaged by a variety of diseases. They begin to lose their ability to function as they normally would in removing waste products from the blood.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Frequent, acute, bacterial kidney infections.
- Untreated lower urinary-tract infections.
- Diabetes.
- Urinary obstruction, such as stones or tumors.
- Long-term use of catheters.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

In many cases, there are no preventive measures. Controlling diabetes and getting treatment for urinary-tract infections can help reduce risks.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

There is no cure. The disease progresses until dialysis or kidney transplant is required. If symptoms occur, they may be relieved with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Chronic kidney failure, which can be fatal.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

• Your health care provider will do a physical exam. Medical tests include urine studies and urine culture. X-ray, ultrasound, and cystoscopy (use of a tube with a camera on the end to see inside the urinary tract) may be done.

• Treatment may include drugs, surgery, dialysis, and kidney transplant. Follow your treatment plan carefully. This may not be easy for an illness that causes few symptoms in the early stages.

• Surgery may be needed to relieve obstruction or correct any structural problem in the urinary tract.

• If chronic kidney failure develops, a kidney transplant or kidney dialysis can be lifesaving.

• To learn more: National Kidney & Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse, 3 Information Way, Bethesda, MD 20892, (800) 891-5390; website: www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov.

MEDICATIONS

• Antibiotics may be prescribed. They are usually taken for months or years.

• Drugs to keep the urine slightly acidic may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No special diet. Drink plenty of fluids each day. Drink cranberry juice to acidify the urine.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

• You or a family member has symptoms of chronic kidney infection.

• You or a family member has symptoms of an acute kidney infection, such as urgent, frequent, or burning urination; fever and chills; fatigue; and cloudy urine.

Special notes:

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