



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

An inherited kidney disorder in which cysts develop in the kidneys. The cysts replace normal kidney tissue and reduce kidney function. Most people show no symptoms until adulthood. Then symptoms progress slowly for up to 20 years. It is a common hereditary disease in the United States.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Early stages:

- Blood in the urine that may be visible only by microscope exam.
- Repeated kidney infections.
- A mass in the abdomen.
- High blood pressure.
- No symptoms (often) until the cysts replace so much normal kidney structure that kidney failure occurs.

Symptoms of kidney failure:

- Pain in the lower back.
- Frequent urination.
- Increasing fatigue and weakness.
- Headache.
- Bad breath.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Fluid build-up (swelling around the ankles or eyes).
- Shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Itching skin.
- Menstruation stops in women of childbearing age.

CAUSES

This disease is inherited. The cause is unknown.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Family history of polycystic disease.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Cannot be prevented at present. If polycystic kidney disease runs in your family, get medical advice about tests to discover if you have kidney cysts. Even if you feel well and don't have the disease, get regular check-ups. If you have a family history of polycystic kidney, seek genetic counseling before starting a family.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

There is no cure for polycystic kidney disease. Medical care may slow the progressive kidney damage by treating complications as they arise.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Kidney failure and end-stage renal disease (ESRD).
- High blood pressure.
- Aneurysms (ballooning of weak places in arteries).
- Infection or rupture of cysts.
- Cysts in the liver and other organs.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your family medical history. Medical tests may include blood studies, CT scan, ultrasound, and others.
- There is no specific treatment for the disorder. Treatment is aimed at preventing complications or treating them if they occur.
- Check your blood pressure each day and keep a record.
- Surgical procedures may be needed if kidney cysts rupture, large cysts cause pain, or if cysts in the liver cause problems.
- If kidney failure develops, dialysis or surgery to perform a kidney transplant may be recommended.
- 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 for infection or antihypertensives to control high blood pressure may be prescribed.
- Most drugs are excreted by the kidney. If you have chronic kidney failure and take prescription drugs, the dose may need adjustment because of this disorder.
- Vitamins and supplements may be recommended.

ACTIVITY

- Take short, frequent rest periods during the day. Otherwise, stay as active as your strength allows.
- Avoid contact sports to reduce any risk of injury to the kidneys.

DIET

Usually, no special diet. A low-salt diet may be recommended if high blood pressure or kidney failure develops. Drink at least 8 glasses of fluid every day.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of polycystic kidney.
- You have symptoms of kidney failure, signs of infection, urination decreases, or blood appears in urine.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page