

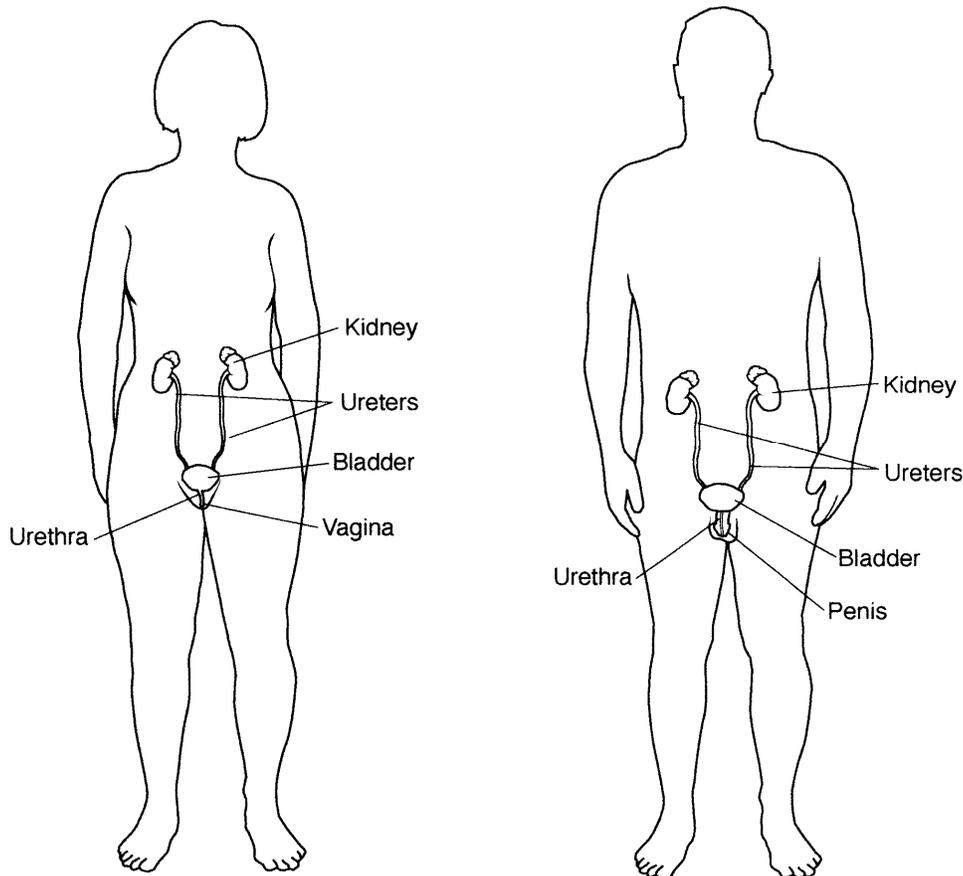
# Kidney Failure

Kidney failure is also called renal failure. With kidney failure, the kidneys cannot get rid of the body's extra fluid and waste. This can happen because of disease or damage from an injury.

The kidneys:

- Get rid of excess water and waste products
- Adjust the fluid and chemicals needed by the body
- Control blood pressure
- Control the hormones in the body that make new red blood cells

The kidneys take excess water and waste products from the blood and turn it into urine. Urine is then passed out of the body. Most people have 2 kidneys. A person can live a healthy life with one kidney.



There are 2 kinds of kidney failure called acute and chronic.

### **Acute Kidney Failure**

Acute kidney failure is a sudden loss of kidney function that happens within hours or days. Causes may include:

- Severe infections
- Severe burns
- Injury to or blockage of the blood flow to the kidneys
- Some medicines, and alcohol or drug abuse
- Low blood pressure
- Blockage in the urinary tract
- Heart failure

The kidneys can often get better when the cause of the problem is found and treated. Dialysis may be needed to help remove waste from the body until the kidneys are working again.

### **Chronic Kidney Failure**

Chronic kidney failure occurs when the kidneys slowly lose their function. It is a lifelong disease that does not get better. Causes may include:

- Diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease
- Kidney stones
- Blockage or problems in the urinary tract
- Lupus, an autoimmune disease
- Scleroderma, a skin and connective tissue disorder
- Chronic infections
- Some medicines taken over time for other conditions, and alcohol or drug abuse

Signs of Chronic Kidney Failure include:

- Swelling in the body, such as hands, face or feet
- Changes in how often you need to urinate
- Feeling very tired or weak
- Headache and confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling short of breath
- Itchy skin

There is no cure for chronic kidney failure. It is treated with diet changes and medicines. When the kidneys lose most of their function, called end-stage renal failure, dialysis is needed several days a week. A kidney transplant may also be a treatment option.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

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