

## FACT SHEET

# How to get the most out of your doctor visit

When you live with chronic kidney disease (CKD) or want to keep your kidneys healthy, every visit to your doctor matters. Planning ahead helps you understand your health, speak up about your needs, and get the best care possible.

## Before your appointment: Prepare

Being ready can make a big difference! Here's how to plan ahead for your visit:



- ✓ **Know why you're going.** When you schedule your appointment, tell the office what you want to talk about. This helps your doctor prepare, too.
- ✓ **Bring your questions.** It's easy to forget things during an appointment. Write down any questions or concerns you have ahead of time and bring the list with you.
- ✓ **Take your medications with you.** Put all your prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements in a bag or take pictures of the labels. This helps your doctor know exactly what you're taking.
- ✓ **Bring a helper.** Ask a friend or family member to come with you. They can remind you of your questions, help take notes, and support you during the visit.
- ✓ **Share allergies and side effects.** Let your doctor know if you've ever had a bad reaction to medicine or food, or if something you're taking now is making you feel sick.



## Talk openly with your doctor

Let your doctor know if you're having trouble with any of the following:

- **Paying for medicine.** Some medications are expensive. Your doctor may be able to help find cheaper options or connect you with support programs.
- **Buying healthy food.** Eating well can help your kidneys, but it's not always easy. If you can't afford certain foods, tell your doctor—they may connect you to a dietitian or other resources.
- **Getting to your appointments.** If you miss visits because of transportation, let your doctor know. There may be ways to help you get there.
- **Understanding your treatment.** If instructions or medical terms are confusing, ask for a simpler explanation. You deserve to understand your own care.
- **Managing everything on your own.** If you feel overwhelmed or don't have the help you need at home, speak up. Your doctor may be able to connect you with social workers or community programs.

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## If you have CKD

If you already have CKD, it's important to ask a few extra questions to help manage your condition:



- 1 How often should I get my kidney numbers checked?
- 2 How does my eGFR look compared to last year?
- 3 How has my UACR changed?
- 4 Do I need to see a kidney specialist (called a nephrologist)?
- 5 What else can I do to slow down kidney damage?
- 6 Does my diet affect my kidney health?
- 7 Does my weight make a difference?
- 8 Will I need dialysis or a kidney transplant in the future?
- 9 What are my treatment options?
- 10 Am I a good candidate for a kidney transplant?
- 11 Where can I go for more help or support?

**You are your own best advocate. Being prepared, asking questions, and sharing your challenges can help you take control of your kidney health. Your care team is there to help you—so don't be afraid to speak up and ask for what you need.**

For more information, visit:

National Kidney Foundation: [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Find a kidney health coach: [www.kidneycarecoaches.com](http://www.kidneycarecoaches.com)

## Questions to ask about kidney health

Even if you don't have CKD, these questions can help you learn more about your kidneys:

- 1 How are my kidneys doing?
- 2 What do my eGFR and UACR numbers mean?
- 3 When were these tests last done?
- 4 How often should I get these tests?
- 5 What can I do to protect my kidneys?
- 6 Are any of my medications helping my kidneys?
- 7 Could any medications be hurting them?
- 8 What's my A1c (blood sugar average)? What should it be?
- 9 What's my blood pressure? What's a healthy number for me?
- 10 What is a healthy weight for me?
- 11 Where can I find more information about kidney health?

