

Diabetic kidney damage

This leaflet outlines steps you can take to minimise diabetic kidney damage.

We have been asked to see you because your diabetes has caused some damage to your kidneys. This usually begins in a minor way, with tiny amounts of protein leaking into the urine. The protein leak can gradually increase, until the kidneys begin to fail and dialysis or a kidney transplant may be required. This usually happens over a long period of time.

There are several things you can do to slow down the damage to your kidneys. Some of these will also help to protect you from heart disease.

- **Blood pressure:** Ensuring blood pressure is well controlled is **very** important to slow progression of kidney damage. Your blood pressure should be less than 130/80 (which is much lower than we would expect in non-diabetics). You may find several blood pressure tablets added to your ACE inhibitor, including calcium-channel blockers, water pills and others.
- **New developments:** There are new promising anti-diabetic treatments in development (SGLT2 inhibitors) that are likely to be introduced for suitable patients into standard practise in the near future.
- **Healthy living:** You should reduce the amount of salt and fat that you eat, take more exercise and not smoke.
- **Cholesterol:** Your cholesterol level should be low (less than 3.5). This will be checked when you have your routine clinic blood test. You may get a tablet of the Statin group to take at bedtime to help with this.
- **Blood sugar:** Your blood sugar levels are extremely important. Keeping your HbA1c level (which shows how your blood sugars are over a long period of time) very low (less than 48mmol/mol with blood sugars less than 5.5 before and 7 after a meal), can slow the kidney damage by as much as half.
- **ACE inhibitors:** If you have even a tiny amount of protein in your urine, you should be taking a tablet of the ACE inhibitor group (e.g. Lisinopril, Ramipril) or ARB group (e.g. Valsartan, Irbesartan). This has an excellent protective effect on the kidneys and is also good for your heart. It reduces blood pressure and can decrease the amount of protein in your urine. If you are unwell, there may be a need to stop taking this.

We will see you regularly in the clinic to help with all these issues and to check your blood and urine levels, as well as your blood pressure. We will review your treatment, so it is always helpful to bring a list of your tablets with you.

Contacting us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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