



Section 1: Introduction to Chronic Kidney Disease

Have you been told that you have kidney problems, or that laboratory tests show your kidney function is not normal? Or does your diabetes, hypertension, or another condition put you at high risk for kidney disease? Do you have a kidney transplant that is failing? If so, you may be one of the estimated 8.2 million people in the United States who are at risk for moderate to severe chronic kidney disease (CKD), or kidney failure.

This Life Options document will explain the risk factors for CKD, and symptoms you should report to your doctor. We'll answer some commonly asked questions and tell you what *you* can do to feel your best—and help prevent or slow progression to kidney failure.

When you learn about CKD, you are taking the first step toward an active role in your healthcare. Research suggests that people who are active partners in their care are more likely to live long and well.

What is chronic kidney disease?

Chronic kidney disease, or CKD, is a condition that affects the function of the kidneys, and that may progress over time to kidney failure. When the kidneys fail, dialysis or a kidney transplant is needed to support life—and people can live for decades with dialysis and/or kidney transplants. Many diseases can cause CKD. The most common are diabetes and high blood pressure.

Successful kidney patients say you should remember three things:

ATTITUDE – You can live a good life with kidney disease.

ANSWERS – You need to educate yourself so you can stay as healthy as possible.

ACTION – You and your doctor need to agree on what you should and should not do, and then you need to follow the list as closely as you can.