

**Fact sheet – Indigenous health**

# What do kidneys do?

*Kidneys flush out all the rubbish*

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## What do kidneys do?

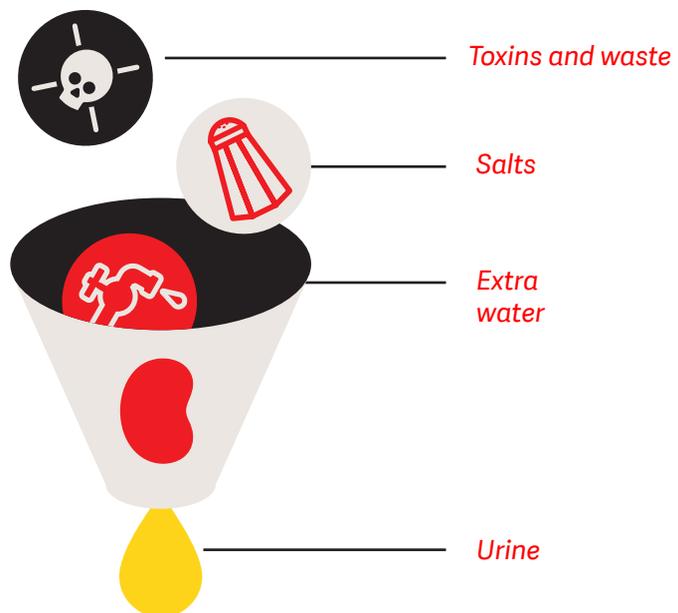
You have two kidneys that are busy working 24 hours a day.

Each one is the size of your fist and is bean-shaped.

You can live quite well with only one kidney. However, with no working kidneys death happens quickly.

The kidneys play a huge role in keeping you healthy.

Think of them as a very complex, environmentally friendly, waste disposal system, cleaning your blood.



## What else do kidneys do?

- **Blood pressure control** – kidneys keep your blood pressure regular/normal
- **Vitamin D activation** – kidneys help make Vitamin D, keeping your bones and muscles strong
- **Make erythropoietin (EPO)** – Kidneys make 'EPO'. It tells your body to make red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen around your body and give you energy.

**All this makes the kidneys a very important player in the way your body works and your overall health.**



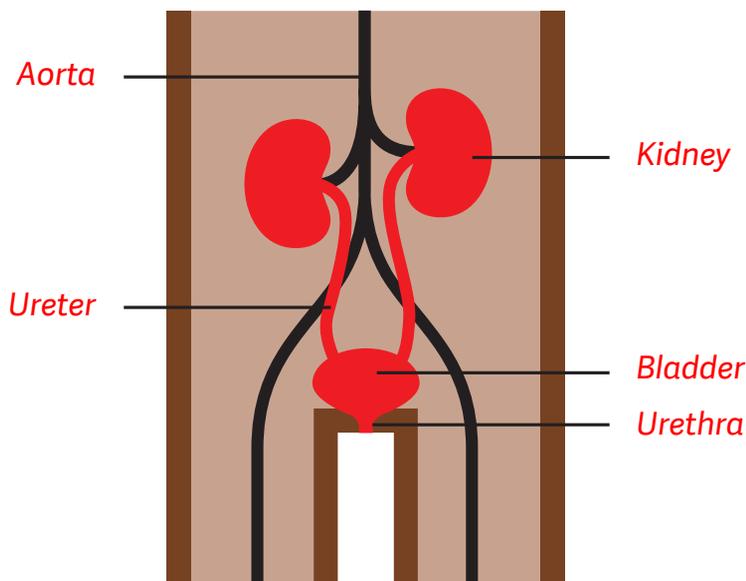
## How do kidneys make urine?

Your blood supply goes through the kidneys about 12 times every hour. The kidneys make urine (wee) from excess fluid and rubbish or poison in your blood.

Urine (wee) flows down through narrow tubes called ureters to the bladder where it is stored. When you feel the need to wee, the urine passes out of your body through a tube called the urethra.

Around one to two litres of waste leaves your body each day as urine.

If your urine is pale yellow your body has enough water.



## How do kidneys balance water?

If you drink more your kidneys make more urine so you wee more.

If you need a drink, your kidneys try to save water so you wee less.

If you are drinking the right amount of water your urine should be pale yellow.

If your urine is dark yellow or brown you need to drink more water.



For more information about Kidney or Urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Health Information Service (KHIS) on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website [kidney.org.au](http://kidney.org.au) to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or Health Professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the health professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or health professional.



If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, contact the National Relay Service on **1800 555 677** or **relayservice.com.au**

For all types of services ask for 1800 454 363

Contact your doctor or Aboriginal Medical Service if you need more information.