

How can I keep my kidneys healthy and strong?

It is never too late to make changes

Important things you can do to keep your kidneys healthy and strong:

- Quit smoking
- Lower your blood pressure
- Manage your sugar levels
- Maintain a healthy diet and weight
- Be active and exercise when you can

If kidney disease is found early, these things will help you to reduce more damage.



Quit smoking

People who smoke are three times more likely to have kidney disease and a 4 to 5 times greater risk of heart attack and stroke.

Action you can take: If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do, quit, or ask for help to quit.



Maintain a healthy diet and weight

It is important to maintain a healthy weight for your height.

Healthy eating tips:

- Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, rice, wholegrain cereals, nuts and seeds, beans, and low-fat dairy products.
- Natural foods such as traditional bush tucker are good.



- At least once a week eat some meat (e.g. chicken) and fish.
- If you are thirsty, drink water.

Action you can take: Try to choose foods that have less sugar, salt and saturated fats. Fresh foods (those that don't come in a packet) are best.

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Be physically active

There are different ways you can be active, e.g.

- Instead of driving, you can walk.
- Go fishing.
- Play a game or do a sport.
- Swim.
- Take a friend for a walk to the shops.
- Clean the house or do some gardening.

Action you can take: Check with the mob from the health clinic to see if you are okay to do exercises and which ones you can do.



Drink plenty of water, avoid sugary drinks and limit alcohol

Did you know?

- There are 16 teaspoons of sugar in one bottle of cola.
- Sugary drinks don't have anything healthy in them and can give you diabetes.
- Excessive alcohol intake can lead to heart disease and high blood pressure, increasing the risk of kidney disease.
- Water has no calories and is the best choice of drink for you and your kidneys!

Action you can take: Replace sugary drinks with water. Limit your alcohol intake.



Look after your blood pressure

Get your blood pressure checked regularly by your doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker.

Take your blood pressure tablets regularly as directed by your doctor.

Avoid:

- Putting salt on food.
- Salty foods - you should have less than 5 grams (~1 teaspoon) of salt a day.
- Highly processed foods.

Action you can take: Find out what your blood pressure is. Ask if this is a good blood pressure for you.



Look after your diabetes

Diabetes causes 70% of kidney failure in First Nations peoples. High blood sugar can damage

kidneys, so if you have diabetes, monitor your levels.

Things you can do to keep your sugar under control:

- Eat foods that do not have added sugar in them. Sugary foods include lollies, cakes, cookies, sweet rolls, pastries and desserts.
- Choose drinks that do

not have added sugar in them. Sugary drinks include soft drinks, juices, energy drinks, flavoured milk.

- If you have tablets or insulin, take them regularly as directed by your doctor.

Action you can take: Find out what your blood sugar is. Ask if this is a good blood sugar for you.

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Things to Remember:

- It's never too late to make changes to help your kidney health.
- Healthy lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, eating healthy and being physically active all help your kidneys keep healthy.
- If you have diabetes, make sure that you keep your sugar levels under control.
- A healthy blood pressure is important for healthy kidneys.

What does that word mean?

- **Blood pressure** - The pressure of the blood in your arteries as it is pumped around the body by the heart.
- **Diabetes** - A chronic disease where levels of sugar in the blood are too high. This happens because the body doesn't produce or use a hormone called insulin the way it should.
- **Saturated Fat** - A type of unhealthy fat that is found in foods from animals, such as meat, full-fat dairy products, and eggs as well as some oils such as coconut and palm oil. Too much saturated fat can increase your blood cholesterol and lead to heart disease.



For more information

To access more information about Kidney Disease, please scan the QR code.

Freecall **1800 454 363**
kidney.org.au



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

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.