

# What do kidneys do?

**Kidneys flush out all the rubbish**

## What do kidneys do?

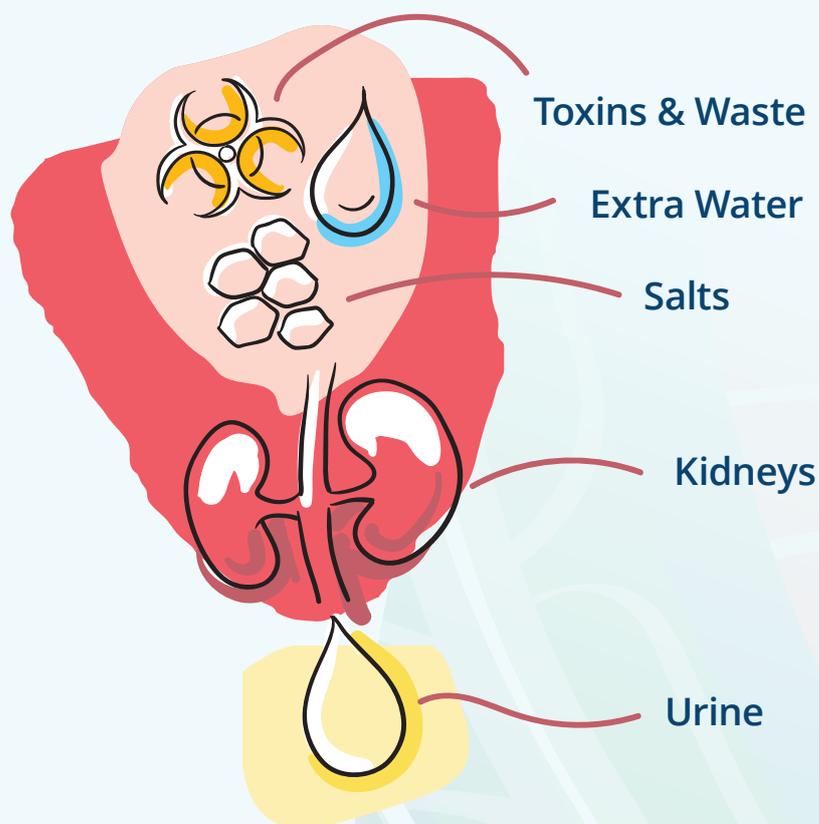
**You have two kidneys that are busy working 24 hours a day to clean your blood. They filter out toxins, salts and extra water, which leave your body when you wee.**

Each kidney is about the size of your fist and shaped like a bean.

You can live quite well with only one kidney. However, if both of your kidneys stop working, you need to have dialysis or a kidney transplant to stay alive.

Dialysis means that a machine helps to clean your blood. Having a kidney transplant means that you get a healthy kidney from someone else.

The kidneys play a huge role in keeping you healthy.



## What else do kidneys do?

- **Blood pressure control**  
kidneys keep your blood pressure regular/ normal.
- **Vitamin D activation**  
kidneys help make Vitamin D, which helps keep your bones and muscles strong.

- **Make erythropoietin (EPO)**  
Kidneys make 'EPO', which 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.

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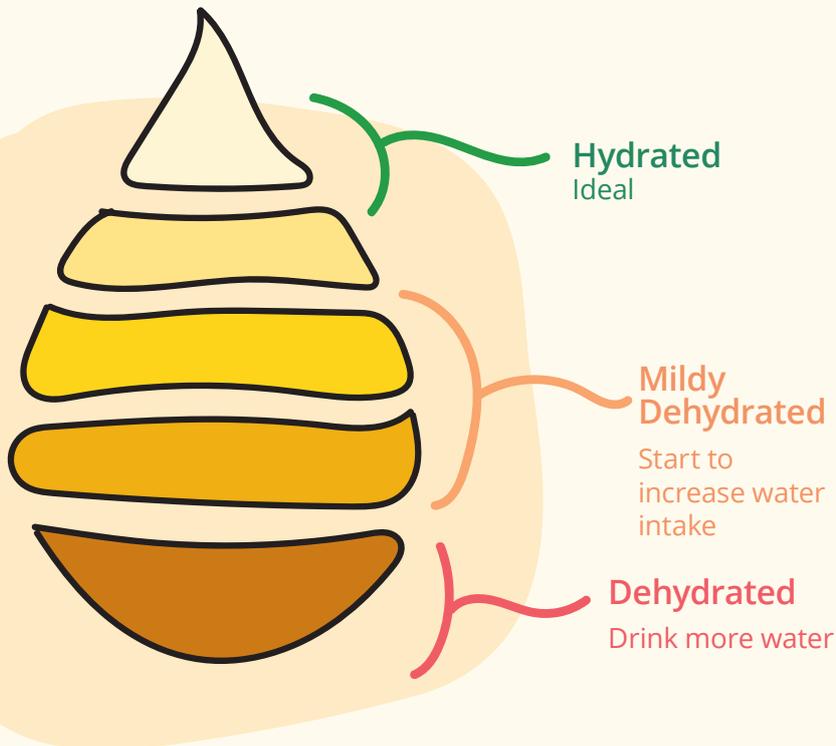
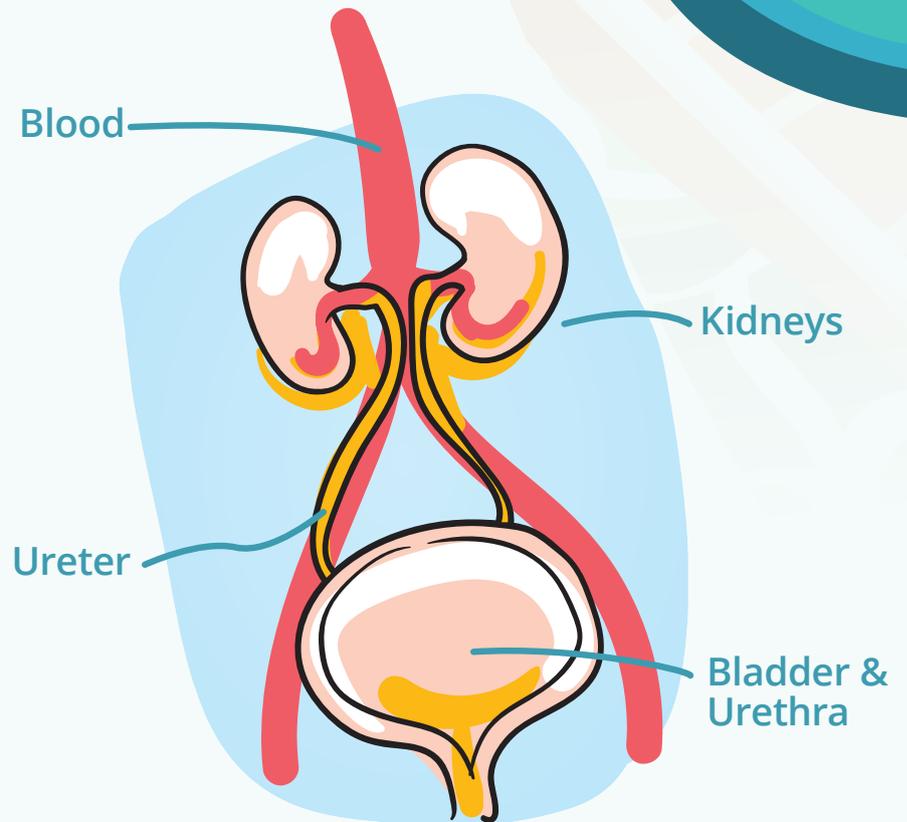
### How do kidneys make urine (wee)?

**The blood in your body goes through the kidneys about 12 times every hour.**

The kidneys make urine (wee) from extra water and waste (toxins and salt) 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 and extra water leaves your body each day as urine.



### 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.

## What do kidneys do?

### Things to Remember:

- Kidneys are important to your overall health. They have a number of jobs, such as removing extra water and waste products from your body via your urine (wee).
- If your kidneys stop working, you will need dialysis or a kidney transplant.
- Healthy urine (wee) is a pale yellow colour.



### What does that word mean?

- **Blood pressure** - The pressure of the blood in the arteries as it is pumped around the body by the heart.
- **Dehydration** - When you do not have enough fluids in your body. If dehydration is severe, it can cause serious problems and you may need to go to hospital.
- **Dialysis machine** - A machine used in dialysis that filters your blood to remove excess water and waste products when your kidneys are damaged, or not working.
- **Dialysis** - A treatment for kidney failure that removes waste products and excess fluid from your blood by filtering your blood through a special membrane. There are two types of dialysis: haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.
- **Erythropoietin (EPO)** - A body chemical (hormone) mainly made by your kidneys that causes the bone marrow to make red blood cells. A lack of this hormone can cause anaemia.
- **Kidney transplant** - A treatment for kidney failure where a kidney is removed from the body of one person (the donor) and put into the body of the person with kidney failure.
- **Ureter** - The tube that connects the kidneys to the bladder.
- **Urethra** - The tube that takes urine out of the body from the bladder.
- **Urine** - The name for excess fluid and waste products that are removed from the body by the kidneys. Commonly called wee.



### For more information

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

Freecall 1800 454 363  
[kidney.org.au](http://kidney.org.au)



If you have a hearing or speech impairment, contact the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677 or [relayservice.com.au](http://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.