

Requesting a Kidney Health Check

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This document helps you to have a discussion with your GP about the results of your recent Kidney Risk Test, which indicates that you have risk factors for kidney disease. This factsheet will help you to ask for a Kidney Health Check.

Goals for the visit:

- Ask questions about your kidney disease risk
- Ask how to start the Kidney Health Check process

Tips for your GP visit:

- Make sure to print out the email you received from Kidney Health Australia which shows you have risk factors for kidney disease and show your GP
- Think about questions you want to ask your GP and write them down before your appointment.
- It may be hard to remember everything your GP tells you so write down the answers to your questions.
- Take along a family member/friend along to the appointment to help you remember the information.
- Ask the doctor for a medication list or pharmacy medicine review to help you understand your medications.

Questions to ask your doctor:

1. What do my risk factors mean in relation to kidney disease?
2. Why do I need a kidney health check?
3. What will the result of a Kidney Health Check tell me?
4. What is a normal result?
5. Following my Kidney Health Check – what are the next steps?
6. Do I need to change my lifestyle? (E.g. diet, activity, weight, smoking)

What is a Kidney Health Check?

Your kidney health, or your kidney function is measured with a Kidney Health Check. This check includes:

1. **a blood test**, to find out the level of creatinine (a waste product) in your blood and calculate what is called your estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR). This shows how well your kidneys are filtering your blood.

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2. **a urine test**, to check for albumin (a type of protein) in your urine. This shows if your kidneys are damaged., and
3. **a blood pressure test**, as kidney disease causes high blood pressure and high blood pressure causes kidney disease.

After having your kidney health check, it is important to discuss the results with your GP and understand when you next need to have your next Kidney Health Check.

Following your visit

Kidney Health Australia are the peak body for kidney health in Australia. For over 50 years, we have been providing trustworthy and up-to-date resources and support to help people manage their kidney health. For free information and factsheets, books and videos about kidney disease, as well as diet and nutrition information to manage a healthy kidney lifestyle, visit our website at kidney.org.au.

If your GP recommends lifestyle modifications to manage your risk factors or you are diagnosed and need support, please contact our free Kidney Helpline on **1800 454 363**. Our friendly team of health professionals can help you find the right information to help you manage your diagnosis, understand treatment options, and find the best support options for you.

What is kidney disease?

Kidney disease occurs when the tiny filters in your kidneys are damaged. This damage stops them from filtering your blood properly meaning waste products can build up in your blood. Kidney damage usually happens slowly over many years - you can lose up to 90% of your kidney function without experiencing any symptoms. Detecting kidney disease early gives you the best chance of living a long and healthy life.

Key facts about kidney disease

- There are five stages of kidney disease with Stages 1-2 being mild disease and Stage 5 referred to as 'end stage kidney disease' or 'kidney failure' where people require Kidney Replacement Therapy – dialysis or transplant to survive.
- People with Type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure are at higher risk of kidney disease.
- 1 in 10 Australians have signs of CKD, but less than 10% of them are aware they have the condition. 90% of kidney function can be lost before symptoms are apparent.

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- There is currently no cure for kidney disease, however, if detected early and managed well, deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by up to 50%.

For more information visit kidney.org.au

Information for the GP:

- *Risk factors for developing kidney disease include people who: have diabetes, have high blood pressure, have established heart problems (heart failure or heart attack) or have had a stroke, have a family history of kidney disease or kidney failure, are obese with a body mass index (BMI) 30 or higher, have smoked or is a current smoker, are 60 years or older, are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin or have a history of acute kidney injury.*
- *Patients with risk factors for chronic kidney disease should undergo a Kidney Health Check every 1-2 years. A Kidney Health Check includes a blood test for serum creatinine / eGFR; a urine albumin: creatinine ratio, and a blood pressure check. For guidance on detecting and managing kidney disease, refer to the Chronic Kidney Disease Management in Primary Care (4th edition) handbook available at kidney.org.au/health-professionals. You will find the algorithm for the initial detection of kidney disease on page 9.*
- *Kidney Health Australia operates a free Kidney Helpline service. Refer your patient to this service for additional advice, information, and resources. Phone: 1800 454 363 or email Kidney.Helpline@kidney.org.au*
- *Free patient resources on kidney disease are available at kidney.org.au*