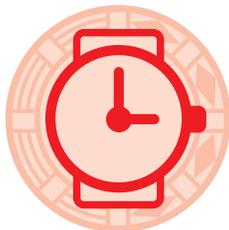


Fact sheet – Indigenous health

How do I keep healthy?

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You look after those kidneys and they can look after you



It is never too late

Smoking, high blood pressure and high sugar levels in your blood all damage your kidneys.

Some people think if they already have kidney damage it is too late to take care of them.

It is never too late.

If your kidneys are not too damaged you can keep it that way.

If you have early kidney damage you can slow down the damage by up to 50%. This means it can take twice as long to need dialysis or a transplant. You are also less likely to have a heart attack.



Quit Smoking

People who smoke are three times more likely to have kidney damage, and have 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 Weight

It is important to maintain a healthy weight for your height. A balance of the food you eat, and how active you are, help to control your weight.

- Food can make you gain weight. Activity can make you lose weight.
- Ask your clinic how much you should weigh to see if you have got the balance right.

Healthy eating tips include:

- Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, legumes and wholegrain bread and rice.

- Natural foods such as traditional bush tucker are good.
- At least once a week eat some lean meat such as chicken and fish.

Action you can take: When you go shopping look at the food label and try to choose foods that have a low percentage of sugar and salt and saturated fats.



Be active

Choose to be active in many different ways. Do at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week –

- 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

Being active and doing exercise leads to increased strength, stamina and energy. Being physically active makes you feel and look good.

Check with the mob from the health clinic to see if you are okay to do exercises.

Action you can take: Choose one way you can be more active. Increase your activity as your fitness improves.



Drink plenty of water, limit sugary drinks

Did you know there are 16 teaspoons of sugar in one bottle of coke?

- Make water your first choice because kidneys love water
- It contains no calories and is cheap (or free from the tap)
- Sugary drinks can give you diabetes
- Fizzy sugary drinks don't have anything healthy in them.

If you drink fizzy drinks regularly either cut back or give it up for good.

If you are not able to have fresh fruit then one glass a day of fresh fruit juice is OK.

Action you can take: Replace a soft drink with water.



Look after your blood pressure

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

Take your blood pressure tablets regularly like the doctor tells you

Avoid;

- Putting salt on food
- Salty foods - you should have less than ½ teaspoon of salt a day

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

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



Look after your diabetes

8 in 10 Aboriginal people get kidney damage from diabetes.

The higher your blood sugar the more damage to your kidneys.

If you have diabetes make sure you monitor and watch your blood sugar levels.

- Eat foods that do not have sugar in them.

- Choose drinks that do not have sugar in them.

If you have tablets or insulin take them regularly. Keep your sugar under control.

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

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 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.