



Chen Senior
Medical Center

Protecting Your Kidney Health

Simple steps to support
your kidneys as you age.



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What Do Your Kidneys Do?

Your kidneys may be small, but they keep your body in balance. Most people are born with two kidneys that work quietly in the background, often without you noticing.

Your Kidneys Help Your Body By:



Removing Waste & Extra Fluid

Filters waste from your blood and removes it through urine.



Supporting Blood Pressure

Helps keep your blood pressure in a healthy range.



Keeping Bones & Blood Healthy

Supports bone strength and red blood cell production.



Maintaining Balance

Keeps the right balance of minerals and fluids in your body.

You only need one working kidney to live, but when your kidneys aren't working as well as they should, waste and fluid can build up in your body. Over time, this can affect how you feel and how your body functions.

That's why taking steps to protect your kidney health, especially as you age, is so important.

Why Kidney Health Matters as You Age

Kidney function can slowly change as we get older. These changes are common and often manageable, but they can be hard to notice without testing.

Why are kidney problems hard to spot?

Kidney disease often develops slowly and may not cause noticeable symptoms at first. Many people don't realize there's a problem until their kidneys are already under strain.

Is it normal for kidney function to change with age?

Yes. Aging, along with conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes, can affect how well your kidneys work. That's why regular check-ins with your doctor matter.

Why is early detection important?

Catching kidney changes early can help slow progression and protect your overall health. Simple blood and urine tests can show how your kidneys are doing, even before you feel any symptoms.

How do kidneys affect the rest of your body?

Your kidneys are closely connected to your heart, blood pressure, bones, and circulation. Keeping your kidneys healthy supports your whole body, not just one organ.

Are You at Risk?

Some health conditions and habits can increase your risk for kidney problems. Answering a few simple questions can help you understand whether it's time to talk with your doctor about kidney testing.

- Do you have diabetes?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Have you had heart or circulation problems?
- Do you have a family history of kidney disease?
- Do you often use certain pain medications?
- Have you had kidney stones or frequent urinary infections?

If you answered “yes” to any of these, that doesn’t mean something is wrong, but it does mean your kidneys deserve a closer look.

What should you do next?

Talk with your doctor about simple tests that can catch changes early, often before symptoms appear. Simple, routine tests can help your doctor understand your kidney health.

Common tests include:

- **Blood tests** to check how well your kidneys are filtering waste
- **Urine tests** to look for signs that your kidneys may be under strain



Signs to Watch For

Kidney problems don't always cause symptoms right away. In fact, many people feel fine even when their kidney function has started to change. Still, there are some signs your body may be trying to tell you something.

Talk to your doctor if you notice:



Feeling more tired than usual

Ongoing fatigue or low energy that doesn't improve with rest may be a sign that your body is holding onto waste.



Swelling in your feet, ankles, hands, or legs

When kidneys aren't removing extra fluid well, swelling can build up, often in the lower body.



Changes in urination

This may include urinating more or less often, changes in color, or foamy urine.



Shortness of breath

Extra fluid in the body can make breathing feel harder, especially during activity or when lying down.



Poor appetite or nausea

A buildup of waste in the body can affect how food tastes and how your stomach feels.

These symptoms can have many causes and don't always mean there's a kidney problem. Simple testing can help your doctor understand what's going on and decide next steps, if needed.



TIP: If something feels different or doesn't seem right, it's always okay to ask.

Small Steps to Protect Your Kidneys

Protecting your kidneys doesn't require drastic changes. Small, everyday habits can help reduce strain on your kidneys and support your overall health.



Manage Blood Pressure & Blood Sugar

Follow your care plan to help reduce strain on your kidneys.



Stay Active

Choose a movement that feels safe and comfortable for your body.



Maintain a Healthy Weight

Even small changes can support kidney and heart health.



Avoid Smoking

Smoking damages blood vessels and makes kidney problems worse.



Be Mindful of Medications

Some pain relievers can harm the kidneys when used often.



Limit Salt (Sodium)

Too much salt can raise blood pressure and stress your kidneys.

You don't have to do everything at once. Focus on one or two changes that feel manageable and build from there.

Remember: Your care team can help you decide which steps matter most for you.

Taking care of your kidneys doesn't mean giving up the foods you enjoy. It's about making small, thoughtful choices that reduce strain on your kidneys and support your overall health.

Simple changes, made consistently, can help protect kidney function, support healthy blood pressure, and help you feel your best day to day.

Simple Food Swaps That Support Kidney Health



Swap salty foods for lower-sodium options

Many packaged and restaurant foods contain more salt than your body needs. Too much sodium can raise blood pressure and make your kidneys work harder. Try choosing fresh foods, low-sodium labels, or seasoning with herbs and spices instead of salt.



Swap processed meats for fresh proteins

Processed meats like bacon, sausage, and deli meats are often high in salt and preservatives. Choose fresh chicken, fish, eggs, beans, or lean meats when possible to reduce sodium intake.



Swap canned or boxed foods for fresh or frozen foods

Canned soups, boxed meals, and frozen dinners often hide extra sodium. Fresh or frozen vegetables (without added sauces) are usually better choices and just as convenient.



Swap sugary drinks for water or unsweetened beverages

Drinks with added sugar don't support kidney health and can affect blood sugar and weight. Choose water, sparkling water, or unsweetened tea unless your doctor advises otherwise.



Use smaller plates to help with portion sizes

Eating more than your body needs can strain your kidneys over time. Using a smaller plate can help you enjoy balanced meals without feeling deprived.

Your doctor or care team can help guide food choices that fit your specific health needs.



TIP: You don't have to change everything at once. Start with one or two swaps that feel realistic for you and build from there.

Staying Active Safely

Physical activity helps keep your blood flowing, supports healthy blood pressure, and improves overall well-being—all of which benefit your kidneys.

You don't need intense workouts to see benefits. Any movement that is safe, enjoyable, and comfortable for you counts.

Easy ways to stay active:

- Walking
- Stretching or gentle yoga
- Light strength exercises
- Balance activities to help prevent falls

Start slow and build gradually. For example, try walking for 10–15 minutes a few days a week, then increase as you feel ready.

Always check with your doctor before starting a new exercise routine, especially if you have other health conditions.

You're Not Alone in Protecting Your Kidney Health

Kidney health is about more than test results. It's about your daily habits, emotional well-being, and the support you have around you. You don't have to manage kidney health on your own.

Support may include:

- Your doctor and care team
- Nurses, social workers, and center staff
- Family members and friends
- Community programs that support nutrition, movement, and transportation



TIP: Regular visits with your care team help build trust, catch changes early, and make sure your care fits your life, not the other way around.

Take the Next Step Toward Healthier Kidneys

Small steps today can make a meaningful difference over time.

- Talk to your doctor about your kidney health.
- Ask whether kidney testing or regular check-ins are right for you.
- Visit **chenmedicalcenters.com** or call **(855) 845-6333** to learn more about how our care teams can support you.

Every step counts. With the right care, support, and early attention, protecting your kidneys is not only possible, it's within reach.