

5. Prevention of Kidney Disease

The two major contributors to Chronic Kidney Failure in Malaysia are diabetes and high blood pressure. Hence, the sooner these illnesses are treated, the better the chance of preventing Chronic Kidney Failure.

Those suffering from these ailments should be medically supervised, because careful control of blood pressure, blood sugar level, taking a low protein diet and weight reduction can significantly slow down or even prevent the development of chronic kidney diseases.

In the case of acute kidney diseases, it is also important to seek medical attention early, so that effective therapy can be started promptly. Early treatment of acute kidney disease can prevent permanent damage, whereas delay in diagnosis and treatment may result in permanent kidney failure.

Even in the case of irreversible kidney failure, dialysis and kidney transplantation have made remarkable progress in recent years, enabling patients with End Stage Kidney Failure to lead active lives.

5.1. High Risk Group

One belongs to the high risk group if he has the following or he is:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Family history of kidney disease, diabetes or high blood pressure
- Obesity
- Kidney stone
- Above 50 years old

Patients with diabetes, high blood pressure or individuals with a family history of kidney disease, diabetes or high blood pressure should have checkups on blood pressure, blood sugar and urine tests for at least once a year to check on the status of their kidneys. It is important that patients with established kidney disease must monitor their condition by visiting their doctors regularly.

Practice a Balanced Diet

- Lower the fat, salt and sugar content in your diet and add more fiber, fresh fruits and vegetables. A low salt diet is especially important if you have high blood pressure.

Overcome Obesity

- The best way is with regular exercise and a well balanced diet. Exercise for 30 minutes for at least 3 times a week if possible.

Quit Smoking

- There is no 'safe' level of smoking and smoking is damaging to blood vessel walls. Damaged blood vessel walls can lead to atherosclerosis (hardening of blood vessels) and ischemia of the kidneys.

Avoid Unnecessary Medications

- Certain medications are toxic to the kidneys in susceptible individuals, especially if taken in large amounts over long periods. Your doctor can give you specific advice on what medications to avoid.

5.2. SCREENING IS VITAL

Annual Health Screening is vital to check whether your kidneys are healthy. Your checkup should include:

- Blood pressure
- Blood test for glucose and creatinine
 - A kidney profile includes measurement of various chemicals and waste products in the blood. This test would be able to tell you if you have moderate to severe kidney failure. It is important to note that this test is usually normal in early kidney disease.
- Urine test
 - The urine test is important in screening for kidney disease. Specialized urine test will be able to confirm early kidney disease thereby allowing appropriate treatment to prevent further kidney damage.

Ultrasound may be required for certain individuals. It is a form of scanning which looks at the kidneys and urinary tract. Certain diseases such as kidney stone, tumor, cyst or blockage of the urinary tract can be detected by an ultrasound scan