

Chronic Kidney Disease (part 3)

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Chronic kidney disease is a condition a person suffers when there is gradual and usually permanent loss of kidney function over a period of time. It may take months to years. Chronic kidney disease is very common and prevalent worldwide. It is divided into five stages of increasing severity as mentioned below in the Table:

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Slight kidney damage
2	Mild decrease in kidney function
3	Moderate decrease in kidney function
4	Severe decrease in kidney function
5	Kidney failure that may require dialysis or transplant

The term renal refers to kidney, and kidney disease is sometimes referred to as chronic renal failure. Mild form of kidney disease is sometimes referred to as renal insufficiency.

Kidneys have the remarkable ability to compensate for problems in their function. Chronic kidney disease progresses without symptoms for a long period of time until minimal kidney function is left. Symptoms, when present, vary depending on the body system that is affected. Most patients have very few urinary symptoms like decrease in urine output despite advanced chronic kidney disease.

Weakness and fatigue may be an initial symptom from anemia and accumulation of waste products in the body. Chest pain may be a symptom due to anemia or uremic pericarditis (inflammation around the heart). Similarly, shortness of breath develops because of anemia or accumulation of fluids. Fluid retention may cause symptoms of hypertension, edema (swelling of legs) and puffiness around the eyes as well. Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, itching, easy bruising, numbness in the feet or hands (peripheral neuropathy), disturbed sleep, altered mental status (encephalopathy) may happen due to accumulation of waste products.

Decreased sexual interest and erectile dysfunction are common in patients with chronic kidney disease. Bone pain and fractures may develop due to abnormal calcium and phosphorus metabolism due to lack of active Vitamin D and secondary hyperparathyroidism.

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