

## Kidney Disease: The Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease



Chronic kidney disease is divided into five stages based on how well the kidneys are working. To find the stage of your kidney disease, your doctor will measure how well your kidneys are filtering your blood. This is called glomerular filtration rate, or GFR. To find your GFR, your doctor uses your test results as well as your size, age, race, and sex.

Your doctor may give you a yearly creatinine test to estimate your GFR. Creatinine is a chemical that builds up in your blood when your kidneys are not working well.

### What can you do to slow kidney disease?

At all stages of chronic kidney disease, you can take steps that may help slow or stop kidney damage and help keep you healthy:

- Follow an eating plan that is good for your kidneys. A dietitian can help you make an eating plan with the right amounts of sodium, fluids, and protein.

- Get some exercise every day. Work with your doctor to design an exercise program that is right for you.
- Avoid medicines that can damage the kidneys, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). NSAIDs include ibuprofen and naproxen.
- Do not let yourself get dehydrated. Get treatment right away for diarrhea, vomiting, or fever. Be careful when you exercise or during hot weather.
- Do not smoke or use other tobacco products.
- Do not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.
- Talk to your doctor about controlling your blood pressure.
- Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.
- Talk to your doctor about lowering your risk for heart disease.

### When should you see a kidney specialist?

Your doctor may refer you to a kidney specialist, or nephrologist, as your kidney function gets worse (GFR below 60 if you have diabetes, or GFR below 30 if you do not have diabetes). A nephrologist can treat kidney disease and other conditions that may be causing it.

A nephrologist will take over most of your care if you need dialysis or a kidney transplant.

### What are the stages?

The stage of your kidney disease is based on your GFR. The lower the GFR number, the worse the kidney function.

## Stages of chronic kidney disease

Stage	Description	GFR	What this means to you
1	Kidney damage with normal or high GFR	90 or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your doctor will try to find the cause of your kidney disease and begin treatment.</li> <li>Keep your blood pressure below 130/80. If you have diabetes, control your blood sugar levels.</li> <li>See your doctor regularly to check your condition.</li> </ul>
2	Kidney damage with mildly low GFR	60–89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your doctor will estimate how quickly your disease is progressing.</li> <li>Control your blood pressure and blood sugar levels.</li> <li>Continue to see your doctor for treatment and testing.</li> </ul>
3	Moderately low GFR	30–59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your doctor will check you for complications, such as anemia and bone disease, and begin treatment if needed.</li> <li>Continue to see your doctor for treatment and testing.</li> </ul>
4	Severely low GFR	15–29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide what type of treatment you want if kidney failure develops.</li> <li>Continue to see your doctor for treatment and testing.</li> </ul>
5	Kidney failure	Below 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start dialysis or have a kidney transplant.</li> <li>Continue to see your doctor for treatment and testing.</li> </ul>