



Being diagnosed with chronic kidney disease (CKD) can be a very trying and difficult time for everyone involved—the patient, their family and friends. But information can go a long way towards helping gain control of the situation. A patient who knows what's coming, what to watch out for and what treatment options are available if their kidneys fail can make educated decisions about their own healthcare.



First, talk with your doctor about pinpointing your diagnosis to assess your kidney function to help plan your treatment. Tests are conducted to determine the stage and type of kidney disease, the size of the kidneys and the damage already done. After receiving these results, your doctor and you will need to sit down and create a plan of action.



People who have kidney disease also have an increased chance of developing heart problems. One of the first things to do upon getting a CKD diagnosis is to get control of any other health problems you may have, including diabetes, high blood pressure and anemia.



If you have diabetes, you will need to monitor your blood sugar, follow a specific diet and take your medication as ordered by your doctor.



If you have high blood pressure, your doctor may recommend you lose weight, cut down on salt in your diet and take your medication. Anemia (low blood count) can also lead to heart damage and may be controlled by taking a hormone called EPO and iron supplements. You should also have healthy cholesterol levels and not smoke.



Once your kidney disease and other health problems are under control, it is vital to track your progress. Your glomerular filtration rate (GFR) should be checked regularly to clarify the status of your kidney disease. Also, the amount of protein in your urine will be checked from time to time to make sure your kidneys are doing their job well.



Lastly, nutritional tests may be done to make sure you are getting enough protein and calories to maintain your overall health. Your doctor can refer you to a registered kidney dietitian who will help you plan your meals so you can eat the right foods in the right amounts

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: **855.NKF.CARES** or email: **nkfcares@kidney.org**