

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ABNORMAL KIDNEY TEST RESULTS

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## What Are Tests for Kidney Disease?

The kidneys play an important role in keeping the body healthy. They remove waste from the body, balance blood pressure, make important hormones, and help keep bones strong. Kidney tests show how well your kidney is working. They can help your doctor know if you have any kidney damage or disease.

## How Do They Work?

The most commonly used kidney tests are done by measuring the level of certain proteins in your blood (creatinine) and urine (albumin or protein). If your kidney is damaged, some of the protein levels might be higher than normal. These tests are used to calculate two measures that doctors use to determine severity of kidney damage and the risk of getting worse: estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) and urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio (uACR).

## Do Abnormal Results Mean That I Have Kidney Disease?

Since tests and calculations are not perfect, people with healthy kidneys may occasionally have abnormal test results. Also, kidneys can recover from a brief injury.

If test results fall outside of the normal range, the tests should be repeated and followed up to see if you have chronic kidney disease. Depending on the specific test and result, your doctor may also need to perform one of the following tests to see if you have an underlying health condition:

- Kidney ultrasound
- Additional blood testing
- 24-hour urine collection
- Genetic testing
- Kidney biopsy

## What Causes Chronic Kidney Disease?

Kidney test results that remain higher or lower than normal may be due to damage from:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Inflammatory conditions (autoimmune or infectious conditions)
- Medication (NSAIDs, bisphosphonates)
- Obstructions (kidney stones)
- Lack of blood flow
- Genetic disorders



## How Is Chronic Kidney Disease Treated?

Treating chronic kidney disease early can prevent or slow down more damage to the kidneys so that your kidneys keep working. Treatment can include:

- Taking medicine to protect the kidney
- Taking medicine to treat diabetes, high blood pressure, or other health problems that are damaging your kidneys
- Avoiding cigarettes and drugs that may harm your kidneys
- Exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy weight
- Limiting salt and alcohol and following a healthy diet

## Questions for My Doctor

- Do I have kidney disease?
- How can I stop kidney disease from getting worse, or prevent kidney disease?
- What should I do to treat my diabetes or high blood pressure?
- Do I need to change my diet or alcohol intake?
- Do I need to adjust the medicines I normally take?
- Is there anything I should avoid, given my kidney function?
- What is my risk for worsening disease or other complications of kidney disease?

## For More Information



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### National Kidney Foundation

[www.kidney.org/kidneydisease/aboutckd](http://www.kidney.org/kidneydisease/aboutckd)

### National Kidney Disease Education Program

[www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov)

### American Association of Kidney Patients

[www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org)