

## What is CKD?

Chronic Kidney Disease is the problem in kidneys where kidneys cease to perform the process of filtration as a result toxins get added to the blood.

There is not one good reason why kidneys stop performing this critical function. Some auto immune diseases like Lupus, IgA nephropathy can result in renal failure.

Good news is that if any kidney disease is detected early, treatment can help to slow down the progression of the disease.

## What are the symptoms of CKD?

- High blood pressure
- Severe headaches
- Low blood counts
- Low platelet count
- Fatigue
- Swelling in hands or feet
- Blood in Urine

## **How is CKD Identified?**

CBC (Complete Blood Test) can reveal if kidneys are impaired. Ask doctor to check for Creatinine and BUN which are vital elements to check for the kidney functions. Normal Creatinine levels are in the range of 0.7-1.2 mg/dL. Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) levels should be in the range 7-20 mg/dL.

## **What you should do if detected with CKD?**

If you are detected with CKD, you will need to evaluate how seriously your kidneys are impaired. If detected early, there is a fair chance of slowing down the progression of any disease that is causing the kidneys to deteriorate. The early detection will save you from the torture of dialysis. So it is imperative you see a nephrologist immediately.

## **Treatments**

When you see a nephrologist, he/she might put you on medication for CKD depending upon the severity of the illness. Mostly you will go on steroids that will help to control the disease. The dialysis will be needed if you are detected with kidney failure.

## **CKD and Renal Failure**

The CKD can lead to ESRD (End Stage Renal Disease). If you are diagnosed with ESRD, you will need to be admitted to hospital. The initial treatment will try to revive your failed kidneys by using high doses of steroids. This could lead to hallucinations, delusional thoughts because high doses of steroids can cause this.

The Creatinine and BUN values will be high if you have ESRD. Because of renal failure, the kidneys are unable to filter the blood; the blood will contain toxins that

can lead to uneasy feelings, including severe nausea, delusional thinking, and high blood pressure.

## Preparing for Dialysis in case of Renal Failure

Unfortunately in most of the cases, renal failure is irreversible. While you are in hospital recovering from kidney failure, doctors will prepare you for dialysis. It is critical to purify the blood using a machine when kidneys are not filtering. Doctors will perform a minor surgery near your neck to make an opening and attach a pipe to perform dialysis. This is a temporary solution for immediate need of dialysis. Once your toxics are removed from blood after three to four initial dialysis runs, you will be put on a regular schedule of three dialysis treatments a week. The surgeon might talk to you different methods of dialysis.

### **Peritoneal dialysis or Hemodialysis:**

**Hemodialysis** is the most common method used by patients in which a patient is attached to a dialysis machine, size of a refrigerator, and the blood filtration is performed through a fistula on arm or a pipe below neck attached to heart. This dialysis needs to be done at a hospital or in a certified dialysis center.

**Peritoneal dialysis** is performed through abdomen and has an advantage that you can perform this procedure yourself at home, or at work.

In case of renal failure, it is important to track what you eat and what is the balance of compounds in your blood. You may have to take binders if you are high on potassium or any other element. You may need to take shakes to keep you healthy. Talk your doctors what to eat.

## Preparing for Kidney Transplant

In case of renal failure, to save yourself from the torture of dialysis, you will need to look for an option of kidney transplant. Pre-transplant clinics are available in some hospitals that will put you on the path of kidney transplant. There is a waiting list in the United States for getting a kidney. If you can arrange a donor from your family or friends the doctors will have to check for the compatibility. Discuss with your doctor about pre-transplant clinic.

The kidney transplant surgery can take four to six hours. This type of surgery is common in the United States, and should not be life-threatening. The donor goes through laparoscopic surgery while the recipient will need a six to eight inch cut on the side of the abdomen. Normally the recipient will have three kidneys after the transplant.

## Post-Transplant Life

If you undergo a transplant, it is important to take care of your new kidney. As new kidney is foreign to your body, you will have to take immunosuppressant so that your transplanted kidney is not rejected by the body. You will be on immunosuppressant rest of your life. Immunosuppressant reduces immune system; therefore you will be vulnerable to infections. Stay away from sick people. Besides immunosuppressant you may also take low doses of steroids, and other vitamins.

The most common kidney transplant immunosuppressants are CellCept, Cyclosporine, Prograf, Prednisone, and Rapamune.

These medications are given in a combination to suppress immune system so that transplanted kidney is not rejected. CellCept is usually given with Rapamune, and a steroid (Prednisone) medication.

There are side effects from these medications. Prograf increases your blood sugar. Rapamune increases your cholesterol. So, you may need to take medication for reducing the side effects.

## Ongoing Care

It is very important to take care of your kidney if you underwent a transplant. Stop smoking or drinking alcohol. Eat good diet and a fair square meal. After the transplant you can live a normal life, but you must understand there will be risk of losing your new kidney if you abuse your diet or body. Exercise daily and keep yourself fit.

**Good luck for living healthy!**