



Kidney stones

This leaflet explains how further kidney stones may be prevented.

Introduction

Kidney stones occur in 1 in 20 women and 1 in 10 men. They may cause pain, infection or even damage the kidney function. You may have had surgery or lithotripsy (sound waves to shatter the stone) to remove a stone. There are several things you can do to prevent your kidneys making any more stones.

Why do I have kidney stones?

You may have stones because there is a high level of a particular mineral in your urine. This may be a condition you were born with, it may be related to other illnesses, or it may be related to your diet. You will have blood and urine tests to identify any minerals that may be to blame.

What can I do?

- Drink more water – this is the most important thing you can do. Whatever the cause of your stones, it is important to drink enough to produce 3 litres (5 pints) of urine a day. Diluting the minerals in the urine may be enough to stop stones forming. (Please note: You can drink any type of water – tap, mineral etc. You do not need a water softener!)
- Eat less salt – this reduces minerals in the urine and increases citrate (a urinary acid neutralizer that is produced by the kidneys) which helps to prevent stones.
- Eat less protein – this also reduces minerals in the urine and increases citrate, which helps to prevent stones.
- Eat fewer foods that contain oxalate – tea, nuts (especially almonds), dark roughage (such as spinach, rhubarb, beets, soy products, and cocoa). The renal dietitian will give you advice specific to the type of stones you have.
- If you are prone to urine infections, seek antibiotic treatment as soon as you suspect an infection.
- There is no benefit to reducing the calcium in your diet.

Will I need any other treatment?

Depending on the cause of your stones, there may be specific tablets that will help reduce the particular mineral in your urine.

Sometimes, you may make stones because the urine is too acid or too alkaline. You may be asked to test your urine and take medicine to change the acid base balance of your urine.

Contacting us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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