

Kidney stones

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 we 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 you have had 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. (NB 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, dark roughage. The dietician will give you advice particular to the type of stones you have.
- If you are prone to urine infections, seek antibiotic treatment immediately 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 make the urine less acidic.

Kidney Care Nurses 0118 322 7899 Victoria Ward 0118 322 7476

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