

What You Should Know About Proteinuria

(Patient's education materials from National Kidney Foundation)

What is proteinuria?

Proteinuria means you have protein in your urine.

The kidneys act as filters and keep protein in your body. Very little or no protein normally appears in the urine.

Protein in the urine may be an early sign that the kidney's filters have been damaged by disease, allowing protein to leak into the urine.

How is proteinuria tested?

A simple urine test can be done in your doctor's office to detect protein in your urine.

Does proteinuria mean I have kidney disease?

It may be an early sign of kidney disease, but your doctor will check you again to make sure proteinuria was not caused by something else like not drinking enough water.

If your doctor suspects that you have kidney disease, other tests will be done including:

checking your blood pressure

checking your kidney function by a simple blood test to estimate your glomerular filtration rate (GFR).

An ultrasound exam of the kidneys.

How often do I need to have a test for proteinuria?

People who are at increased risk for developing kidney disease should have this test as part of routine checkups by the doctor. Those at increased risk include:

people with diabetes

people with high blood pressure

people with a family history of kidney failure

people who are older

certain ethnic groups including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and American Indians.

If I have proteinuria, will I need treatment?

If proteinuria is confirmed, your doctor will do other tests and examinations to pinpoint the cause.

Your doctor may send you to a special kidney doctor who will help to develop your treatment plan.

Your treatment may include:

medications

changes in your diet

lifestyle changes such as losing excess weight, exercising and stopping smoking.

What are the symptoms of kidney disease?

swelling

shortness of breath

needing to urinate more often

hiccups

fatigue

trouble sleeping

nausea and vomiting

dry, itchy skin.

For more information:

Speak to your doctor.

Call the National Kidney Foundation's toll-free number 1-800-622-9010.