

Blood Pressure & Kidney Disease

Why blood pressure control is one of the most important parts of kidney care

How are blood pressure and the kidneys connected?

High blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys. Kidney disease can also make blood pressure harder to control because the kidneys help regulate salt, fluid and hormones that affect blood pressure.

Your blood pressure goal should be individualized. Ask your nephrologist what home readings are appropriate for you.

What you can do

- Take blood-pressure medicines consistently.
- Limit sodium as recommended.
- Stay active as your health allows.
- Avoid tobacco.
- Keep a home blood-pressure log if your clinician asks you to.
- Bring your readings and medication list to appointments.

Home measurement tips

- Rest quietly for about 5 minutes first.
- Sit with your back supported and feet flat.
- Keep your arm supported near heart level.
- Use an appropriately sized upper-arm cuff.
- Avoid talking during the measurement.
- Take readings at similar times when tracking trends.

Why sodium matters

Too much sodium can increase thirst, fluid retention and blood pressure. Much of the sodium in the typical diet comes from restaurant meals, packaged foods, soups, sauces, deli meats and other processed foods rather than the salt shaker alone.

Managing Blood Pressure

Practical steps for kidney protection

Medicines commonly used

- ACE inhibitors or ARBs may be used when appropriate, especially in some patients with albumin/protein in the urine.
- Diuretics may help with blood pressure and excess fluid.
- Calcium-channel blockers, beta blockers and other medicines may also be used depending on your health.

Call your care team if

- Your readings are repeatedly much higher or lower than the range your clinician gave you.
- You develop dizziness, fainting or new weakness after a medication change.
- You have worsening swelling or shortness of breath.
- You are unsure whether to take a medicine during vomiting, diarrhea or poor oral intake.

Bring useful information to your visit

- Your home blood-pressure log or device readings
- Your blood-pressure cuff, if your clinician wants to compare it with the office measurement
- A current medication list including over-the-counter products and supplements
- Notes about dizziness, swelling, missed doses or medication side effects

Do not stop or change prescribed blood-pressure medicines on your own. Contact your clinician if you are having low readings, side effects, dehydration, or difficulty taking your medications.