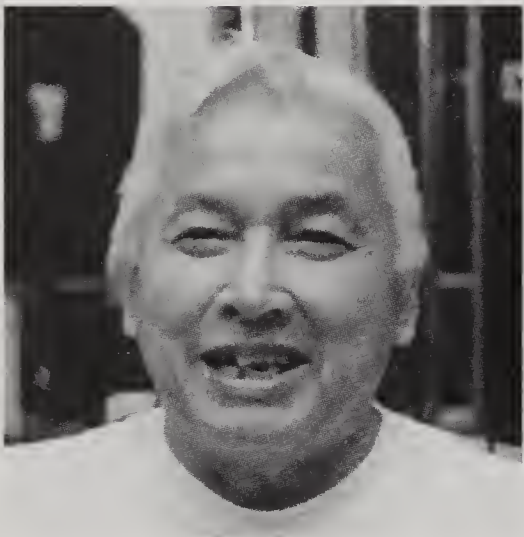


Taking Care of Your Kidneys



**Indian Health Service Division of
Diabetes Treatment and Prevention**



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“I want to keep doing the things I enjoy. I can keep myself healthy. I can prevent kidney damage.”

You can keep your kidneys healthy

There are ways you can keep your kidneys healthy. Preventing and treating bladder or kidney infections is one thing you can do.

This booklet will help you learn about these things:

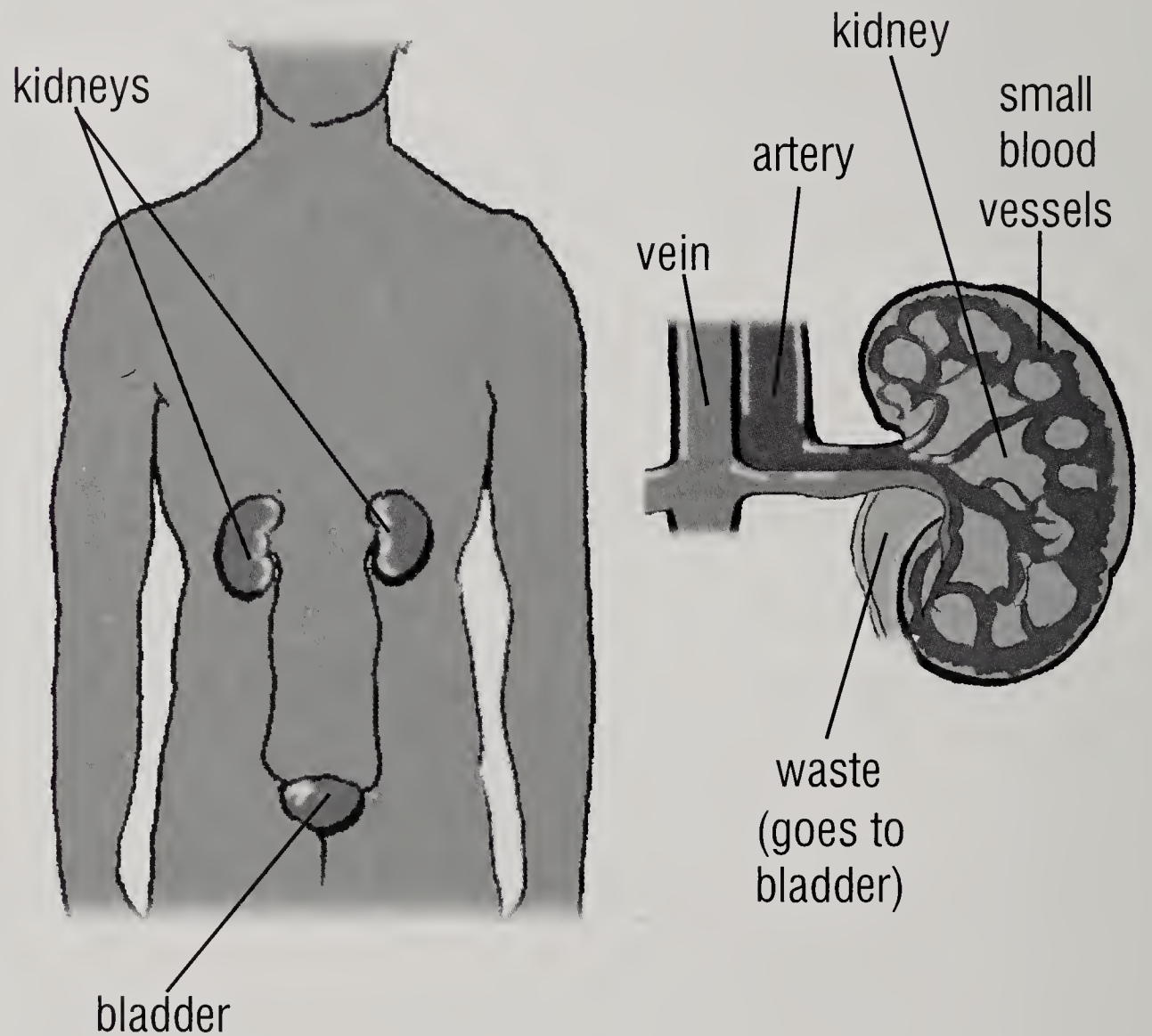
- what kidneys do
- the signs of bladder or kidney infections
- what you should do if you think you have an infection
- how to prevent and treat infections
- ways to prevent kidney damage

How do your kidneys work?

Your kidneys remove waste products from your blood, and puts them into the urine. The urine carries the waste products to the bladder.

When you empty your bladder, you get rid of the urine and waste products. The kidneys and bladder make up the urinary (YOOR-i-ne-ree) system.

**Your kidneys
remove waste
from the blood.**





**“I can prevent
kidney damage.
I can control my
blood sugar and
blood pressure.”**

What causes damage to your kidneys?

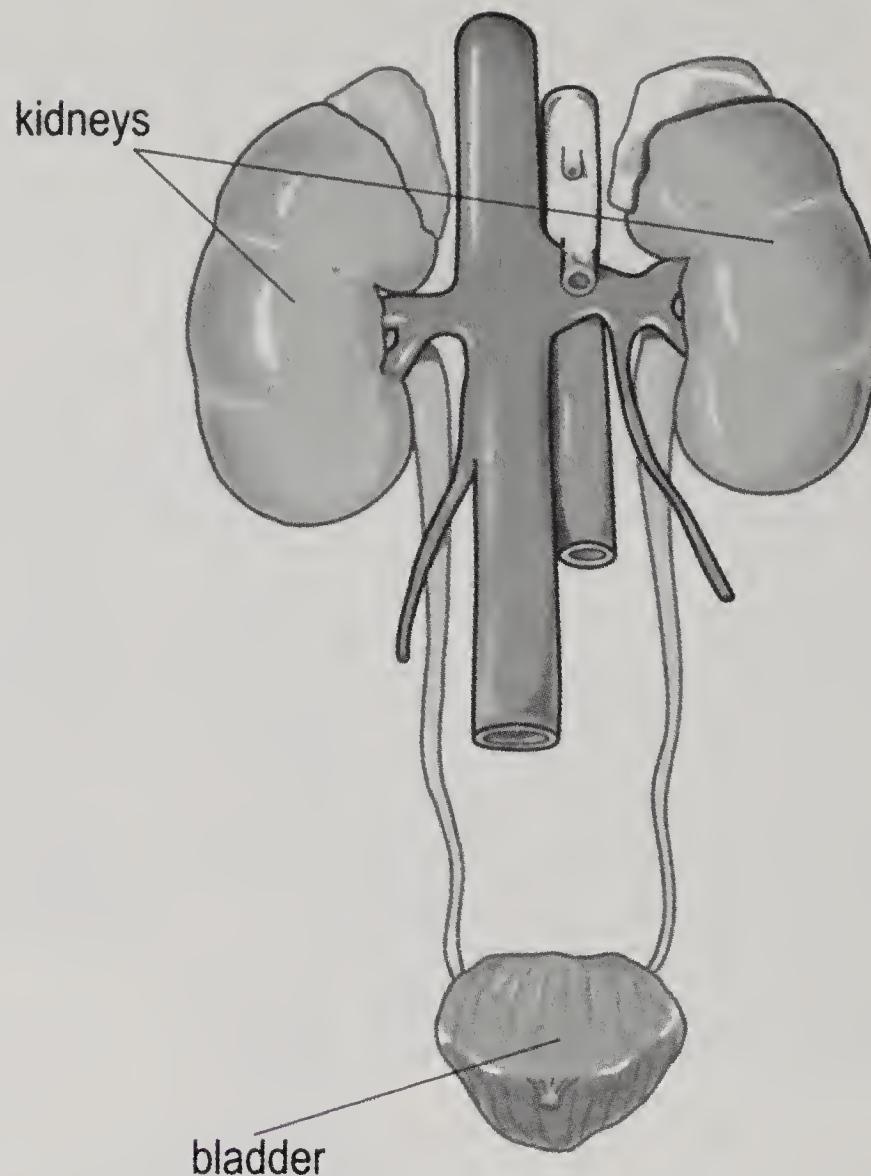
Four things can cause damage to your kidneys:

- untreated kidney infections
- high blood pressure for long periods of time
- high blood sugar for long periods of time
- some medicines

You can prevent most kidney damage.



Infections can quickly move from the bladder to the kidneys.



What causes kidney infections?

Germs cause most infections. Infections usually start in the bladder. The infection can quickly move from the bladder to the kidneys, especially in people with high blood sugar.

Treating all bladder infections right away can prevent kidney damage.

Signs of bladder or kidney infection

These are signs of a bladder or kidney infection:

- fever
- frequent urge to urinate
- pain or burning when urinating
- discomfort in the bladder
- ache in lower back
- milky, cloudy or reddish urine

Most people will have only one or two signs of an infection. Some people will have no signs. A fever may be a sign of a kidney infection.



“My mother could have a kidney infection and not know it. I watch out for her.”

If you think you have a kidney infection

If you think you have a kidney or bladder infection, go to the clinic right away.

Clinic staff can test your urine for signs of an infection. Your health care provider can start treatment right away.

You can prevent kidney damage by treating all infections right away.

If you think you have a kidney or bladder infection, go to the clinic right away.





**“I try to drink
6-8 glasses of
water each day.”**

Treatment for kidney infections

Treatment of bladder or kidney infections includes taking medicine, getting urine tests and drinking water. You can get rid of the infection. Here is what you need to do:

- Get your urine tests - Your health care provider will test your urine before you start medicine. This is to make sure the medicine will work.
- Take your medicine - Take all your medicine, even if you feel better. The infection may come back if you stop taking your medicine too soon.
- Get your urine tests again - Your health care provider may test your urine after the medicine is done. This is to make sure the infection is gone.
- Drink water - Drink at least six glasses of water each day.

**See your health
care provider if
you think you
have an infection.**



Can you prevent kidney infections?

Yes. You can prevent some infections. Taking these steps may help:

- Get your urine checked if you think you have any signs of a kidney infection.
- Take all your medicine for any infection.
- See your health care provider for a urine test. The test is to make sure the infection is gone.
- Urinate when you first feel the urge. Do not hold the urine in your bladder.
- Keep genital area clean.
- Urinate after sex.
- Wipe from front to back after bowel movements.

High blood sugar and bladder infections

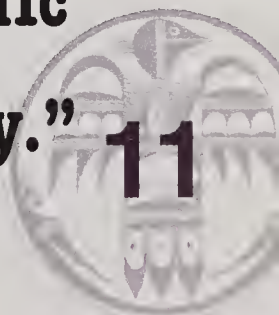
People with high blood sugar tend to get more bladder infections.

Infections usually start in the bladder. The infection can quickly move from the bladder to the kidneys, especially in people with high blood sugar.

Treating bladder infections right away can prevent kidney damage.



“People with high blood sugar may have more infections. I try to control my blood sugar. If I think I have an infection, I go to the clinic right away.”



If your kidneys become damaged

Damaged kidneys do not remove some waste products. The waste products build up in the blood. You cannot see or feel this damage.

Damage occurs slowly, over many years. People with bad kidney damage may have to go on dialysis.

You can prevent most kidney damage.

“I know I can prevent damage to my kidneys. I do not want to go on dialysis. I am trying to learn all I can.”





There are many things you can do to prevent kidney damage.

Preventing kidney damage

You can do these things to prevent kidney damage:

- **Treat any infection right away.**

A bladder infection can quickly move to the kidneys. A kidney infection can cause kidney damage. Treating all infections right away can prevent damage.

- **Control your blood pressure.**

If you have high blood pressure, take your blood pressure pills. Cut down on salt and salty foods. Check your blood pressure often. Ask your health care provider about your blood pressure numbers. A good blood pressure is below 130/80.

- **Control your blood sugar.**

People with high blood sugar tend to get more infections. You can control your blood sugar. Lose weight if you are heavy. Eat less fat food. Become more active.

You can prevent kidney damage

You can prevent most kidney damage from infections.

- When you think you have a bladder or kidney infection, see your health care provider.
- Tell your health care provider about any signs of bladder or kidney infection.
- Take all your medicine for any infection.
- Talk with your health care provider. They can tell you more about preventing kidney damage.

**“I can prevent
kidney damage.
I take care
of myself.
I feel good.”**





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