



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Kidney Disease

Kidney disease can feel difficult to be diagnosed with, but understanding your condition is the first step to taking control of its symptoms. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<b>Albumin</b>	A form of protein that's found in your blood. Normally, this albumin should not pass into your urine, and when it does, it's indicative of kidney disease.
<b>Albuminuria</b>	This simply means having albumin in your urine.
<b>Creatinine</b>	A normal body waste product. Sometimes the level of creatinine in your urine is checked and used to determine how well your kidneys are filtering waste from your blood.
<b>Diabetic Kidney Disease</b>	The medical term for kidney disease that's caused by diabetes. It's also referred to as DKD or chronic kidney disease.
<b>Glomeruli Function Rate (GFR)</b>	The rate at which your kidneys (specifically the glomeruli in them) filter waste from your blood. The test for it is called estimated glomeruli filtration rate (eGFR) test.
<b>Nephrologist</b>	A doctor that specializes in kidney health and the management of kidney disease.
<b>End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)</b>	The final stage and most severe form of kidney disease. It signifies that your kidneys have failed, and at this point dialysis or a kidney transplant is needed.
<b>Dialysis</b>	The process of artificially removing waste and excess fluid from your blood. There are two main kinds of dialysis—hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. With hemodialysis, your blood is filtered by an external machine called a dialyzer. Peritoneal dialysis works by passing dialysis solution into your abdomen through a catheter to filter your blood in your body.



### Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage kidney disease.

#### About Symptoms

- Are there any symptoms that my kidney disease may be getting worse that I should be on the lookout for?
- Am I likely to develop any other health problems/conditions because of my kidney disease?

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#### About Causes & Risk Factors

- I'm aware that kidney disease can be caused by conditions like diabetes, lung disease, and cardiovascular disease. Should I undergo testing for them?
- I understand that diabetes was the cause of my kidney disease, are there any further treatments I should get for it to prevent it from worsening my kidney disease?
- I understand that my high blood pressure was the cause of my kidney disease. Are there any further treatments I should get for it to prevent it from worsening my kidney disease?

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#### About Diagnosis

- What is my GFR rate now? And what exactly does it signify about my kidney function?
- What are the results of my urine albumin test?

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#### About Treatment

- Will I be referred to a nephrologist?
- How often do I have to come in for eGFR tests?
- Has my GFR changed since my last test?
- Has my urine albumin changed since my last test?
- How do I know if my treatments are working?
- Is my kidney disease advancing/getting worse?
- Are my blood pressure and blood glucose levels at optimum levels?
- Are there any medications I'm taking now that I would have to stop?

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