

Understanding Kidney Disease: Myth vs. Fact



MYTH	FACT
<i>Kidney disease runs in my family, but I work out regularly and eat well so I'm not worried.</i>	Some forms of kidney disease are genetic, and even the healthiest people may still be at risk.
<i>Kidney disease runs in my family, so I know I'm eventually going to get it too and there's nothing I can do about it.</i>	If you talk to your doctor early on about kidney disease running in your family, there are some steps you can take to protect your kidneys.
<i>My blood pressure is high, but my doctor said we just need to find the proper medication to treat it.</i>	Persistent high blood pressure can be a sign of kidney disease which could require additional medication.
<i>My family doctor is familiar with my health history and has never mentioned kidney disease, and I feel wonderful, so I'm not concerned.</i>	By the time you feel the signs and symptoms of kidney disease, it could be more advanced. Early kidney disease is often invisible and has no symptoms.
<i>I have been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, and my doctor told me that waiting until my kidneys fail to go on dialysis is my only option.</i>	Depending on the type of kidney disease you have, there may be treatment options that could help save your kidneys and prevent you from going on dialysis. Talk to your family about your concerns and desire to seek a second opinion with a kidney specialist. Talk to your kidney doctor about your specific diagnosis.
<i>My family doctor takes care of many people with kidney disease and understands how to take care of me.</i>	People living with kidney disease should be seen by a nephrologist (kidney doctor) to make sure they are taking the right medications and following a kidney-friendly diet.
<i>Kidney disease runs in my family so I know it may be genetic, but genetic testing is costly.</i>	Today, there are several low-to-no-cost genetic testing options, that include genetic counseling available. These tests could determine if you have the APOL1 gene that puts you at greater risk for FSGS, a specific type of chronic kidney disease.
<i>Kidney disease only affects the elderly.</i>	Although it may seem this way, this is not the case. FSGS, a rare form of kidney disease, commonly presents in young Black people in their teens and twenties. Parents should be involved in discussions about kidney disease with their teens and young adult children.
<i>People get kidney disease because they eat poorly and don't take care of themselves.</i>	There is a form of kidney disease called FSGS that is caused by a genetic variant called APOL1. This gene puts some people at greater risk of kidney disease, whether they live a healthy lifestyle or not.
<i>Having a nice, friendly doctor is more important than their understanding of kidney disease.</i>	While it is important to have a doctor who listens to you, it is equally important to be attentive to your kidney health and proactive with your care.